

LESSONS TO LIVE BY #2

Jkroberts_us@yahoo.com

www.pacolethillsbaptist.org

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Matthew 5:1-8

1. It is important to remember that the Sermon on the Mount can only be fully understood and applied by those who actually belong to Jesus—those who are true disciples.
2. The Sermon on the Mount was not addressed to the crowds; rather it was delivered by Jesus to His disciples.
3. The word “blessed” can be interpreted happy, fortunate, or blissful.
4. However in this context it does not refer to happiness from a human perspective.
NOTE: Our perspective plays an important role in how we interpret and understand Scripture. For instance the statement, “God is love,” means different things to different people depending on their definition and understanding of what constitutes love. God’s love can only be understood by those who have actually experienced it.
5. The word “blessed” refers to a state of being that is only available to those who have been genuinely converted to Christ.
6. Last week we looked at the first four Beatitudes.
7. We could summarize them by saying, “Blessed are those who have repented of their sin and hunger and thirst after righteousness because they have humbled themselves before God having come to understand and mourn their total and abject spiritual poverty.”
8. This morning we are going to examine two additional Beatitudes.

I. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

A. If you are a Christian it is because God has forgiven you a debt that you could not pay based on the fact that Jesus paid it for you.

NOTE: You came to understand that debt when you recognized your total spiritual poverty.

B. God expects those who have been recipients of His mercy and forgiveness to extend mercy and forgiveness to others.

C. In fact, a little later in this sermon Jesus included this line in the Model Prayer, “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” 6:12

D. He then explained, “For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”

NOTE: It is important to note that Jesus is referring to the parent/child relationship that exists between a true believer and his Heavenly Father and not to our eternal salvation that was secured for us by Jesus Christ.

E. Jesus illustrated this truth in a parable He told that is recorded in Matthew 18:23-35.

1. A slave owed his king ten thousand talents. (A talent equaled what a laborer could make in 15 years, so ten thousand talents would require 150,000 years of wages.)
2. He was to be sold, along with his wife and children, to partially repay the debt.
3. The slave prostrated himself before the king and begged for more time to repay the debt. (an impossibility)

4. In response the king felt compassion for his slave, released him and totally forgave him the debt.
5. Having been forgiven the slave went out and confronted a fellow-slave that owed him a debt that equaled one hundred days wages.
6. He seized the man and began to choke him while demanding that he pay back what he owed.
7. When the man begged for more time he was thrown into prison because the forgiven slave refused to forgive.
8. Those who observed all this were deeply grieved and reported what had happened to the king.
9. Notice how Jesus summed up and applied the parable. Matt 18:32-35
 "Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' 34 "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. 35 "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."
10. John MacArthur states, "The presence of chastening (discipline) and the absence of blessing attend an unmerciful believer."

II. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

- A. I think that we could paraphrase this verse by saying, "Blessed are those who have replaced their poverty of spirit with purity of heart."
- B. When it comes to purity God's standard is Himself.
- C. When a person is converted he receives what we might call positional and actual righteousness from God.
 1. His relationship to God has changed because the sin that separated Him from God has been removed or taken out of the way.
 2. He has been declared righteous (justified) in God's sight and clothed with the righteousness of Christ.
- D. He has also become a new creation in Christ. 2 Cor 5:17-18
 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.
- E. His relationship to God has changed, but so has his attitude towards and relationship to sin. 1 John 3:4-10
 4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. 6 **No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.** 7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; **the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning.** The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. 9 **No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.** 10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.
- G. Having been declared righteous he earnestly desires to be righteous in a practical sense.

H. The writer of Hebrews taught that God disciplines all those He loves so that they might share His holiness (purity). Hebrews 12:3-12

I. We are to embrace and cooperate with God in the refining process by pursuing sanctification (growth in Christlikeness). Heb 12:12-14

12 Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. 14 **Pursue** peace with all men, and **the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.**

NOTE: No growth in practical righteousness means no hope of heaven.

APPLICATION

1. Many professing Christians have the mistaken notion that because they have prayed the “Sinner’s Prayer” they are assured of a home in heaven.
2. In reality they have a home in heaven only if Christ actually dwells in them.
3. Paul admonished the Corinthians to make sure that they were saved. 2 Cor 13:5-6
5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you — unless indeed you fail the test? 6 But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test.
4. Many fail the test because their loose, lackadaisical attitude about sin contradicts the possibility of Christ being in them.
5. Others, who profess to be Christians, demonstrate that they have yet to understand the enormity of their sin before God and the extent of His mercy towards them because of their inability or unwillingness to extend mercy and forgiveness to others.
6. Where do you stand in these very important matters?