

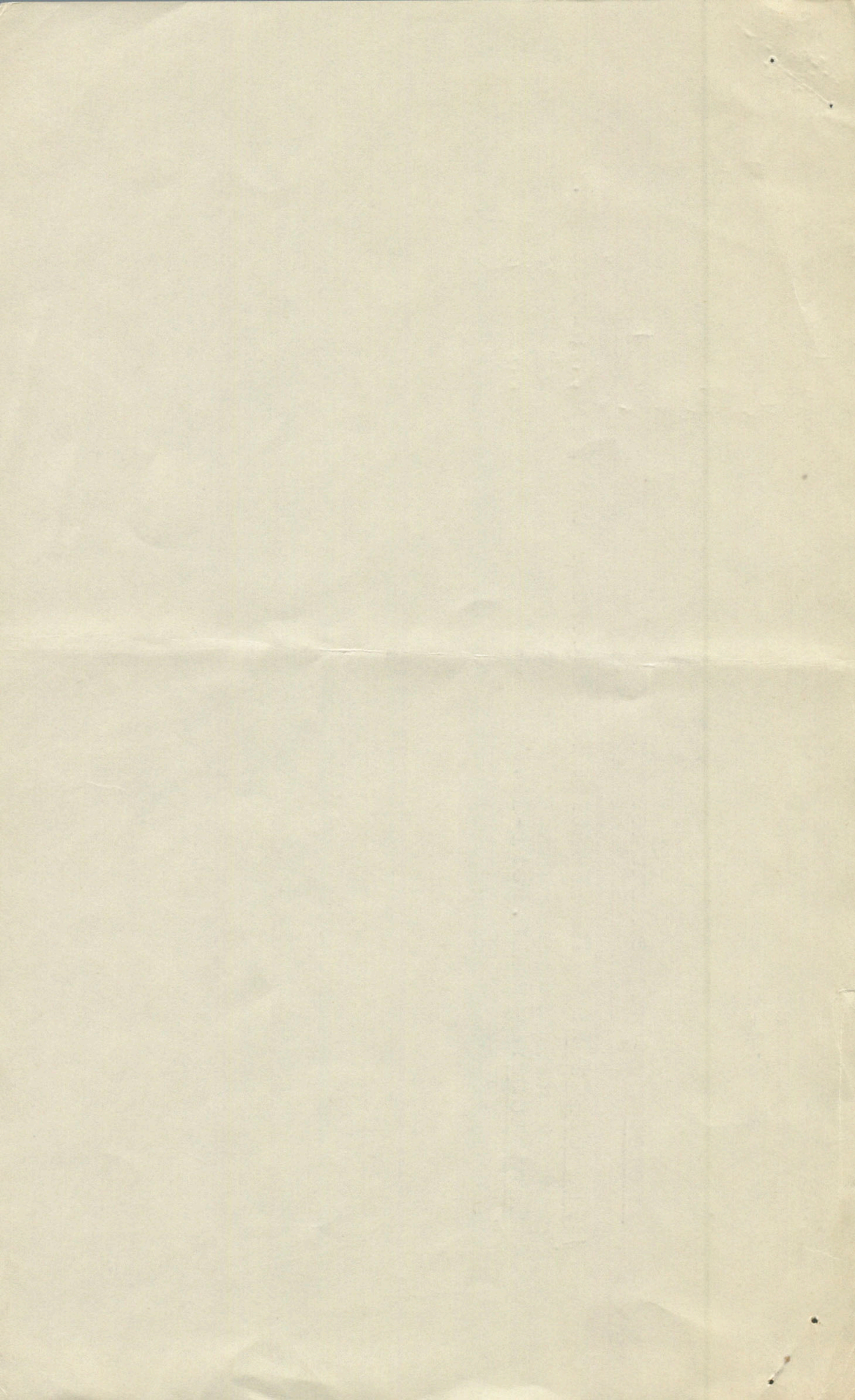
Sermons
New Testament
Matthew 5:1-12

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Theme: The Beatitudes

Proposition: The Beatitudes describe the ideal Christian.

Scripture: Matt. 5:1-12.



Matthew 5:1-12:

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

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

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

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

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall ~~xxx~~ revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Introduction:

1. The sermon on the Mount opens with the moving lyrical strains of the beatitudes.

2. These strains have inspired the hearts of multitudes through the ages.

3. This inspiration is a sure sign that the Beatitudes ~~are~~ original and genuine thought and words of Christ.

4. Meaning of the word blessed, which seems to be the key word to the passage.

a. Some modern translators prefer the word "happy."

b. The Semitic, or Jewish word, which is here translated "blessed" does convey more the idea of happiness; it suggests success or prosperity, and is a formula of congratulation which means "Oh the happiness of."

c. To Greek-speaking Christians, who later translated this passage into the earliest New-Testament manuscript of which we know, the word translated "blessed" had a deep religious meaning, especially when they used it to describe outstanding Christians, such as martyrs.

d. "Blessed" we will here take to mean "happy" in a special, deep, and lasting manner.

5. The Beatitudes progress from the lower of desirable and necessary Christian traits to the higher ones.

6. The Beatitudes describe the ideal Christian man.

I. Blessed are the poor in Spirit.

1. Moffat translates it "who feel poor in spirit."

2. To understand aright the type of character represented by this phrase we must remember that the term "poor" in the O.T. was frequently applied to those men and women who, often wanting in worldly goods and persecuted for their loyalty to God, still remained staunch and true.

a. Such men had learend to place confidence in God as the only true source of strength.

(1) There were such people in the days of Jesus, often disdained and despised by the official classes.

(2) Paul admirably described the poor in spirit in II Cor. 6:10 where we read "a pauper, yet a means of blessing to many; without a penny, yet possessing all things."

3. Kingdom of heaven as the reward for the poor in spirit. Matthew prefers to use "kingdom of heaven" rather than "kingdom of God" because Jews do not like to use the sacred name of God often.

a. The term "realm" or "sovereignty" is better than kingdom, because it implies all the world, not just a locality.

b. The poor in spirit are the people whom God desires as his subjects and loyal followers; through such men he will manifest his authority and extend his power in the world.

4. The follower after Jesus would live in the Kingdom of heaven, and, according to these words of Jesus, to do so must first be poor in spirit.

II. Blessed are they that mourn.

1. Some claim that the word includes the thought of loud lament, such as is common in Oriental lands.

a. This lays too much stress on the external signs of grief.

b. The beatitude could be paraphrased in these words, "Oh the happiness of those who are peculiarly sensitive to sin in themselves and in society, and who feel deeply all the distress caused by the greed and covetousness, the selfish ambitions and the cruelty of men."

2. Comfort of the mourners.

The N.T. lays special emphasis on the ministry of comfort.

a. The Greek word translated "comfort" literally means "to call to the side of."

(1) Jesus comforts men by bringing them to the presence of God, through his gospel. This God is a God of compassion and a friend~~s~~ of sinners, and his kingdom one whose foundations are justice and truth, and whose inhabitants are immortal.

3. Christians want to enter the presence of God, to live in that kingdom, and, according to Christ's words, must, mourn in the sense here given.

III. Blessed are the meek.

1. The word "gentle" conveys much better the idea underlying the Greek word here translated "meek."

a. It does not, however, bring out the thought which is present in the O.T. idea of meekness, of reverence and humility before God.

2. Inheritance of the earth, the reward of the meek.

a. This expression, "inherit the earth," is symbolic for the good things which were to come with the Messianic kingdom.

b. Here it conveys the daring thought of the master that the world will be ultimately peopled by men and women who exemplify his Spirit in their lives.

(1) The possession of the earth by any other spirit leads to war, hate, and oppression.

3. The Christian desires God's mercy, and must, according to these words of Jesus, first exhibit it.

VI. Blessed are the pure in heart.

1. Meaning of the term ~~xxxxxx~~
"purity in heart."

a. Heart means the whole, conscious self.

b. Purity includes the ideas of integrity, singleness of purpose, the absence of low aims.

2. To such a person is given Heaven's richest reward - the capacity to see God wherever he reveals himself.

3. As Christians desire to see God, so they must practice purity in heart, if the words of Christ are to be practiced.

VII. Blessed are the Peacemakers.

1. This beatitude is placed last because the qualities described in the preceding six are the essential prerequisites of a peacemaker.

2. Its presence in the list shows the importance Christ placed on the ideals of peace.

a. He is pre-eminently God's ambassador of reconciliation among men.

3. The establishing of good will and harmony in home and in church, in community and in international relations calls for peace makers - men who can organize and carry into practice the ideals which they hold.

IV. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.

1. The expression "hunger and thirst" implies an intense spiritual longing for Godliness.

2. The word translated "righteousness" has something of the O.T. meaning ~~xxx~~ of the pervading of life by the principles of equity and humanity.

V. Blessed are the merciful.

1. The merciful are the men and women who banish all feelings of revenge and ill will out of their hearts and who seek to cultivate an attitude of love and sympathy toward all mankind, especially toward the disfranchised and dispossessed.

2. Some contrasts between world attitudes toward mercy and that of Jesus.

a. To Aristotle the emotion of pity was a troublesome one, and the function of tragedy, he said, was to evoke pity so that an outlet might be found for the perilous stuff. To Jesus, on the contrary, it is divinely beneficial emotion which must be harnessed to practical and redemptive actions.

b. Buddha sought to escape from misery and wretchedness. Jesus enters the haunts of wretchedness and woe to grapple with them and alleviate the sufferings of those who are their victims.

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4. To such is given open access to the glorious privileges of sonship in the blameless family of God.

5. To be in the family of God, is the desire of Christians. So they must strive to be peace makers.

a. So many who call themselves Christians are anything but peace-makers.

VIII. Verses 10-12 show that Jesus may have anticipated the persecution of his followers; for he would well know that the man who in a pagan, worldly, materialistic society incorporated in his life the graces of the beatitudes would surely have to face ~~scorn~~, obloquy, and severe persecution.

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1. Yet, the promise of heavenly reward should be enough to make unsought for, but not avoided, persecution a thing joyicou\$ly received.

2. Christians should long for that reward of heaven.

Conclusion: Thus, all the things for which they who follow Christ should long can be ~~obtained~~ through practice of the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes describe, that is, the ideal Christian.

Preached at

Palmas — 8-14-44

Mt. Holy — 4-8-45

Providence — 4-8-45

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