



The Narrow Way

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- *The Sermon on the Mount* -

From the Pulpit Ministry of Christ E Free Church of Saegertown
Jan-Feb 2020

“The Narrow Way”



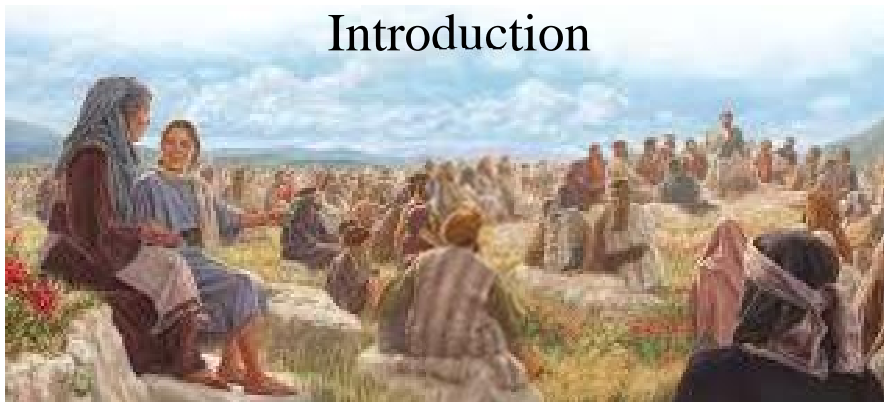
The Sermon on the Mount, taken from the words of Jesus
Matthew chapters 5-7

"Enter by the narrow gate..."
Matthew 7:13a

Table of Contents

- ❖ Introduction, p.6
- ❖ “The Narrow Way”, p.8
- ❖ “Longing for Home”, p.19
- ❖ “Heart for the Kingdom”, p.28
- ❖ “Good Grief”, p.36
- ❖ “Reflecting Christ’s Character”, p.47
- ❖ “Appetite for Righteousness”, p.53
- ❖ “Presenting Christ to the World”, p.70
- ❖ “Presenting Christ to the World”, pt.2, p.73
- ❖ “Pure Heart & Focused Mind”, p.90
- ❖ “ABCs”, p.96
- ❖ Free Resources, p.98

Introduction



The Sermon on the Mount is all about the people and promise of the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus' preaching ministry was focused on repentance for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Jesus wanted the people to know that there was more to life than *this* life. Jesus wanted people to be informed about His kingdom to come and he wanted them to desire it.

So as Jesus traveled, and preached about the Kingdom of Heaven, He would often perform some miracle, such as healing the sick or lame, casting out unclean spirits, giving sight to the blind, making lepers whole or even raising the dead. These were not merely acts of compassion. Jesus preached about the Kingdom of Heaven and would work some miracle to leave them with a foretaste of what His kingdom was going to be like. In so doing, for many, He left them with an unshakable longing for His kingdom.

And as for the Beatitudes, they too were intended to have similar effect. As Jesus talked about the blessedness of those who possessed these blessed attitudes, those people would also leave others longing for the kingdom of Heaven that was displayed through their lives, in demonstrations of mercy, humility, peace and joy in times of trial.

As we go through this study, may we be left with the question we must answer: "Oh God, what does my life communicate to others about your Kingdom reign in a human heart?"



SERMON: “The Narrow Way” Dec.29, 2019

Subj: What it really means to follow Christ against the culture.

“The Narrow Way”, is not intended to imply narrow mindedness, but a narrowing or refining of our Christian perspective and kingdom focus. Rather than broadening our vision for the new year, might we consider sharpening it. It seems the broader our vision gets, the more general and the less specific our vision can become. A narrower vision can be a sharper and more focused vision; refined to see more specifically and more clearly that which God has called us to pursue as Christians.

INTRODUCTION

In Contrast to our present day culture, that attempts to convince us that all ways are good ways, except of course, the way of Truth. They try to deceive us into believing that all paths are acceptable paths, except of course for the path of Christianity. They try to direct us into believing that all answers are correct, except of course, the answers that disagree with the louder voices of the culture. God’s word teaches that there ARE right and wrong answers; that there are right and wrong paths and there are right and wrong behavior.

We all believe we are right, otherwise we would not believe what we believe. We have political positions, religious convictions, and opinions on current events and life issues. With the multitude of antagonistic views and beliefs, “*The Narrow Way*” is intended to call the believing Christian back into a belief system and a life style that is focused and influenced more so by God’s eternal kingdom, than the temporary kingdom of this earthly journey.

Our New Series for the new year, will be “*The Narrow Way*”, which will be a focus on Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, from Mathew chs. 5-7.

We will be taking Mat.7:13-14 as the beginning and framework for our series on the Sermon on the Mount.

Mat 7:13-14 ESV (13) "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. (14) For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

The Context of The Narrow Way

* We begin by briefly familiarizing ourselves with the context of “The Narrow Way”, as it fits within the Sermon on the Mount and pertains directly to the Kingdom of Heaven. Leading up to the Sermon on the Mount and Christ’s teaching on the Kingdom of Heaven we have the baptism of Jesus in Mat.3. John the Baptist begins his prophetic ministry by preaching the Kingdom of Heaven and baptizing many who accept his message.

Mat 3:1-2 ESV In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, (2) "Repent, for the *kingdom of heaven* is at hand."

At this point, Jesus prepares to begin His own earthly ministry and initiates it with His own water baptism.(Mat.3:13-16) Jesus did not need to repent from or be forgiven of any sins, as He is the sinless son of God. But also, that is not the purpose of baptism, to do away with one’s sins. It is faith in God’s sin sacrifice and personal repentance from sin that brings about forgiveness of sins and salvation of the soul. John baptizes Jesus in order to “*fulfill all righteousness*”.

Following Jesus’ baptism, Jesus is led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tested by the devil.(Mat.4) It was after His baptism and testing in the wilderness that Jesus began His ministry teaching and proclaiming the kingdom of Heaven.

Mat 4:17 ESV From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the *kingdom of heaven* is at hand."

* This was the same message John the Baptist proclaimed in the wilderness in 3:2.

So within the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew records Jesus' teaching in Matthew chapter 5, which seems to deal primarily with the perspective and attitude of the those belonging to the family of God or the Children of the Kingdom of Heaven. Here Jesus teaches on what we are familiar with as referred to as The Beattitudes.

Mat 5:3 ESV "*Blessed* are the poor in spirit, for theirs is *the kingdom of heaven*."

These are basically a compilation of various promises of blessing from God, and the attitudes of those who are believers in Jesus and are submitted to His rule in their lives. And four times in that chapter, He refers to the "*Kingdom of Heaven*".

Then in chapter 6 in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addresses the Disciplines & Practices of the children of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Mat 6:33 ESV But seek first the *kingdom of God* and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

This chapter is more focused on our the relationship between a Child of the Kingdom and our King. This includes prayer, fasting, giving and even worrying.

Once we are in chapter 7, and v21, Jesus refers once again to His focus on the Narrow Way of the kingdom of Heaven.

Mat 7:21 ESV "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the *kingdom of heaven*, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Then in ch.7:13, after having previously referring to the Kingdom of Heaven, at least 10 times, Jesus extends an invitation, followed by a warning.

The Reality of the Kingdom of Heaven

We considered the context of the Narrow Way. I feel at this point, I need to address the reality of the Kingdom of heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven refers to the literal, present rule and reign of Jesus Christ and how it interacts with us, and how we respond or submit to His Lordship. The Kingdom of Heaven involves the submission of us as children of the kingdom and under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, to God, as the ultimate King of the Kingdom and His Son Jesus as Ruler over His kingdom.

I believe we are erring when we refer to the present reign of Jesus Christ in the hearts of His people, as symbolic. There is nothing symbolic about it. The reign of Christ is literally existing or it isn't existing. His reign is a present reality, to those who believe in Jesus Christ and submit to the Lordship of Christ, in obedience to His purpose and will. That is not a figurative or symbolic reign, but the literal reign of Christ in our lives.

We don't say; "President Trump is symbolically our President or is figuratively our president, because we can't see him and his office is far away in Washington DC." Of course not! His is out of sight and his office is in DC, but he is *presently*, *literally*, and *really* presiding as President.

Therefore Christ is presently, literally reigning over his people. Yes Jesus is out of sight, and his office is in the heavens, seated at the right hand of Almighty God; nevertheless He is really, presently, literally ruling and reigning over all creation and over the lives of His children who trust in and submit to His Lordship.

In Revelation chapter 23, following the battle of Armageddon, the Bible states that Jesus will literally, yet bodily, physically rule for 1,000 years on this earth. Jesus is literally ruling today, and we submit to that, and one day when Christ takes up His reign on this earth in perfect righteousness and justice, He will literally reign in bodily, visual form for 1,000 yrs over the earth.

The Invitation of the Narrow Way (Mat.7:13a)

* It is crucial that we understand this: That Jesus presents the life of the

child of the Kingdom of Heaven, focused as much on the journey, as on the beginning or entrance into the kingdom. This is the background and context for the whole of the Sermon on the Mount.

Perhaps this visual diagram will help us see the flow of these 2 verses.

Mat 7:13-14 (ESV)

v.13) "Enter by the narrow gate.

For the gate is wide and
the way is easy
that leads to destruction, and
those who enter by it are many.

v.14) For the gate is narrow and

the way is hard that
leads to life, and
those who find it are few.

The Invitation is extended to enter the Kingdom

* This indirectly informs us that everyone is not automatically a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Mat 7:13 ESV "**Enter by the narrow gate.** For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

“Enter” might typically be considered a command. But a command has a connotation of being severe and demanding someone to do something, or else! I would describe this as an Imperative Invitation, with great urgency, representing a non-negotiable expectation.

If we do here, what many people do, that is jump in and read a single verse, without considering what has led up to this verse, we could have all kinds of speculation as to what he is referring to. Enter into Prosperity. Enter the *symbolic* Kingdom of God. Enter into heaven on earth. Enter into the elite group of God’s earthly anointed servants or witnesses. We could come up with all kinds of things we are invited to “enter” into.

But as good Bible students, we are aware of what preceded this, and aware that Christ has made more than 10 previous references to the Kingdom of Heaven. So that when we arrive here at Mat.7:13 and read “Enter by the narrow Gate”, we know he is referring to presently right now –entering into the Kingdom of Heaven, and allowing Jesus Christ to rule and reign in our hearts and lives, literally.

The Clarification: Enter by the narrow Gate

* This indirectly informs us that there is a right entrance and a wrong entrance into the Kingdom of heaven.

Mat 7:13-14 ESV **“Enter by the narrow gate.”** For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. (14) For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

This informs us that all religions are not the same. It clarifies that all paths do not lead to God. It assures us that we all really do not believe the same thing and nor are all going to the same place right.

Enter What? Enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; into God’s Family; become a citizen of the kingdom of heaven; submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ: Enter How? Enter by or through the **“Narrow Gate”**. At least for the Christian, this is enough, to convince us that apart from faith in Christ, there is no way to find forgiveness of Sins. There is no other way, but through JC for our soul to be saved from eternal judgment. There is no other way but through Christ, that we receive the Gift of everlasting life.

This is what Paul was referring to in Romans.

Rom 6:4-5 ESV (4) We were buried therefore with him by baptism into His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

This was Paul's way of stating that "Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and no one comes to the Father except by Him".(Jn.14:6) If we are soft on this, thinking: "*well God doesn't really mean narrow, or exclusive*"; "*God is loving and God will impose plan 'B' on all those who die having rejected Christ, but meant well*". The Bible presents right and wrong answers, right and wrong beliefs, right and wrong choices, and right and wrong behavior and right and wrong attitudes. This attitude is exactly Wrong!

For the people who believe that; they are the ones who have no real burden for the lost nor interest in home or foreign missions. For how can we go about our day, uninvolved in the lives of those around us, if we honestly thought those around us or closest to us were going to die in a horrific car crash this very afternoon? Surely, if we were convinced of that, none of us would be silent towards those we care about and are concerned for, but would we not contact them, plead with them, express our love and concern for them and urge them to listen to your concerns and stay at home?

How much more for those who genuinely have people dear to us, who we fear don't know Christ, would we not prayerfully and lovingly take steps to speak with them about eternity and about faith in Jesus?

2Cor. 5:20 ESV Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We **implore** you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

"Implore" means to urge or beg someone to believe in Jesus and be reconciled to God. The use of "implore" would certainly convey the level of importance and the loving heart felt invitation to enter.

The Christians that offend others in ministry, are often those who are so overwhelmed with concern for the lost, that they are more concerned with them going to hell, than they are interested in keeping them as friends. So they risk their friendships in order to attempt to win them to Christ. And some are won to Christ through this urgency, while others

are offended and use this as an excuse to continue rejecting Jesus, as Savior. How very unfortunate!

The Gate is not the Path (7:13b-14

* But that is just the beginning and not the overall focus of this passage. It seems our focus on this passage is most often about the gate of salvation, and that is about it. We often omit post – salvation growth; the Great Commission mandate of making disciples, nurturing others in the faith and helping them mature in the Lord, along their way or journey.

Warning #1: The Easy Way (v13b

* In the Narrow Way, and the whole of the Sermon on the Mount, the focus is not solely on the entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, but “the way” or on our journey, as residents of the Kingdom, traveling *through* this earthly Kingdom, or traveling *to* the ultimate eternal kingdom of heaven.

Mat 7:13 ESV "Enter by the narrow gate. **For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.**

The **Gate** (entry way) that leads to destruction is “Wide” = broad or flat; that is unhindered. The “**Way**” or the road or path or journey is “easy” that leads to destruction. “Easy” = spacious. This is the journey. Remember: The gate and the journey are not the same.

The broad entrance and the easy way lead to “Destruction” = ruin; taken from a word that means **utter or profound loss**. Isn’t that just a slap in the face to the “prosperity” focus of so many religions today? Follow Jesus and experience, ease, prosperity, abundance, money, power, fame; all your wildest dreams and life’s lusts. Just name your idol and confess that, and you will have it.

One thing is for sure: Satan loves making us think the gate is wide and the journey is easy. Oh, how the enemy takes something so opposed to the Truth and makes it so deceptively and destructively desirable.

Q: So isn't this more of a "clarification", rather than a warning? I believe it is more of a warning; warning us that if we believe the entrance into God's eternal Kingdom is wide, we are mistaken. And if we believe the journey through the kingdom is easy and prosperous, we may be deceived or perhaps even on the wrong path all together. This clarification is a crucial one and the warning is just as sobering.

Warning #2: The True Way (v14)

* The Sermon on the Mount is about the True and Narrow Entrance into the Kingdom, but is also about the True and Troublesome path or journey of the Christian life.

Prov. 14:12 ESV There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

There is a wrong gate and there is a true gate. There is a wrong path and there is a right path. There is a right belief and there are wrong beliefs.

Mat 7:13-14 ESV (13) "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. **(14) For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.**

v.14) the Gate or entryway to God's Kingdom life is "Narrow". But beyond that, the way, the road ahead, the path of righteousness or the Christian journey is "hard." Hard. Narrow. Constricted. The word translated "hard" here in the ESV means *to press* as referring to pressing grapes; to press hard upon or to compress or constrict. Throughout the NT this same word is translated "afflicted", troubled, or distressed.

So as Paul writes to young Timothy to encourage him in the faith and in his ministry, Paul makes this clear:

2Ti 3:10-12 (10) You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, (11) my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra--which persecutions I endured; yet

from them all the Lord rescued me. (12) Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer **persecution**,...

And throughout Jesus teachings on end times; and throughout the book of Revelation, this same word is translated “**tribulation**”.

The wide gate and the easy path lead to destruction. The Narrow gate and the hard or troublesome path lead to life. Too many people today-religious leaders especially – have attempted to redefine or rewrite this passage, to include, encourage and comfort the readers. But this is not meant to be a feel good passage of scripture, but a sober warning to us all.

Many are concerned about the entrance into the Kingdom, but not so interested in the journey or the Christian life hardships through the kingdom. Salvation is of first importance but in no way is it the end result. Like a gate is the entry way or the beginning of the journey, the path beyond the gate actually takes us where we may desire to go. Our life, practice, and service to Jesus Christ are all part of the “hard” path.

CONCLUSION:

So you may be thinking, “so why the big deal?” Whats the problem? So you and I believe a little differently about how a Christian should live.. So what? “**no harm, no foul**”, right?

Mat 7:13-14 ESV "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, **and MANY enter in by it.** (14) For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and find **FEW there are who find it.**

“Many” and “Few”. We aren’t given specific numerical values, only a very concerning warning of “many” who are headed for eternal destruction, and “few” who are actually on the road to and headed for eternal life in God’s family and eternal kingdom. We are not just talking about salvation. We are talking about salvation AND the life-long

Christian journey. It is how we will live. It is how God's kingdom of Heaven works;

God did not give His Son to die for us, so that anybody could live anyway they want, because they have a free "stay out of jail" ticket. The entrance into hell is wide. The path of destruction is easy and many – many find it. That would indicate that "many" of our friends may be on that path. It may mean that many of our family members are on that path.

Traveling the wrong path is not the cause of our eternal destiny. Entering the wrong gate is the reason for traveling on the wrong path and arriving at the wrong destination.

The Majority may be wrong! Our numbers can't determine right or wrong, but God's word must. It is not a matter of thinking "Our way is the best way." But in believing "God's Way is the Only Way". The Narrow Way of living according to God's Kingdom rule in your life, is not a choice between good or best. It is a choice between right and wrong, from God's perspective.

Faith in Jesus Christ brings forgiveness, salvation and life. That life is expected to be troubled, but it is also intended to be purposeful in helping others to find their way.





SERMON: “Longing for Home” Jan.5, 2019

Subj: What it really means to follow Christ against the culture.

Text: Mat.5:1-3

INTRODUCTION

Luk 6:17-19 ESV And he came down with ¹them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his ²disciples and a great ³multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, (18) who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. (19) And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is being followed by a mass of people. ¹Some were the “12”, or His closest disciples or the Apostles. These were devout men, being trained in the faith and were personally groomed in ministry, by Jesus Himself, to continue His work when He is gone. The other group was a ²great crowd of disciples. These would have been the “70” who were sent out, and perhaps some of their own people that they were discipling or had reached.

³The last group mentioned here is referred to as a great multitude from Judea, Jerusalem and from along the coastlands. These would have been people who were interested or seekers being somewhat open and receptive to His teachings about this “kingdom of heaven”. They would have been some people who had heard of Jesus’ reputation and perhaps curious as to what they would see next or hear as they followed Him.

But also, making up a great portion of this “multitudes” or “throng” of people, were those honestly desperate for divine help and sincerely seeking healing, deliverance and more. So as Jesus taught, he had at least 3 audiences, which would have a variety of people, with a variety of needs, having a variety of levels of developing faith.

In Seminary, I wrote a paper in Theology class on the difference between the “Kingdom of God”, and the “Kingdom of Heaven”. It was

lengthy. I utilized both the Greek and Hebrew languages and of course, was filled with many good, solid Scripture references on the topic. It was quite a time consuming assignment and when I finished, I felt very good about my work and was relatively confident I'd get a good grade. When our professor gave our graded papers back to us, at the very top of my paper, in red ink were the words: ***"What are you thinking?"***

Now after having 30 years to think about it, I now agree with my "Prof". Indeed, what *was* I thinking? It seems pretty clear that both terms are referring to basically the same thing, only with slightly differing terminology.

The Sermon on the Mount, is Jesus teaching about...

OUR KING & HIS KINGDOM (Mat.4:1/Heb.2:14)

Our King's kingdom, is the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven focuses on a place, *Heaven*. The Kingdom of God, focuses on the person, *God*. Matthew uses mostly, the term "Kingdom of Heaven", while Mark and Luke use mostly the term, "Kingdom of God".

So when we refer to the Kingdom of Heaven, it has something to do with how God expects things to work out, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Our King offers Victory

* What Jesus experienced on earth, does not *symbolically* represent our victory in the Kingdom of Heaven (**KoH**), over sin, Satan and death. But what Jesus experienced is literally what He achieved for us and is evidence for us of our King's literal victory in His KoH, for our literal victory over sin, Satan and death.

Mat 4:1 ESV Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
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3 times, Jesus was literally tempted, tried and/or tested by Satan. 3 times, Jesus literally resisted and defeated Satan's temptations.

Heb 2:14-15 ESV Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, (15) and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

The power of death is not somehow, that the devil has authority to determine, willy-nilly, who lives and who dies. The power of death is the fear of death; the fear of eternity; the being held accountable for our sins. The power of the fear of death is the fear of what happens when we die and how we stand before Almighty God? What then?

It is this power that death has over us, that Satan uses against us, that keeps unbelievers from being concerned with and keeps us from being victorious over, not realizing or fully comprehending the victory Christ accomplished for us through His death and resurrection, for all who will believe. What Jesus experienced physically, affects us all spiritually. And even though it was spiritual, does not mean it was not literal.

The death and resurrection of Jesus demonstrates the power that the fear of death has over us, has been broken for the true believer in Jesus. He faced death. He literally experienced death fully. He literally defeated death fully. And Jesus, the King of the KoH literally passes that victory on to all who are believers in Him and are therefore, children of His eternal kingdom of heaven.

The King of the KoH, has literally and fully provided victory over sin, death and the devil, for all who are children of the KoH, through faith in Jesus, the King.

Our King offers Hope

* In New Testament times, the message of God's KoH was a message intended to offer a literal, present hope and was intended to result in changed lives for those who believed in Jesus as King and have received citizenship into that Kingdom. This is the good news of the gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven, of which all believers are citizens.

So when John the Baptist began his prophetic ministry in the wilderness, his message was about preparing the way of the Lord and for His kingdom.

Mat 3:1-2 ESV In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, (2) "Repent, for the **kingdom of heaven** is at hand."

“Repent” or turn away from you sin and turn back to God. Remember he was basically preaching to a religious nation, with religious government with religious people who were identified world wide by their religion. Jew. Likewise, following Jesus baptism in the Jordan river and His temptation in the wilderness; The message He began proclaiming was, the same as John’s.

Mat 4:17 ESV From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the **kingdom of heaven** is at hand."

The idea was not that the KoH was merely coming in its fullness, sometime in the future, but that the KoH was literally and presently a reality for all there, who would believe. And it is the same message Jesus commissioned His disciples to proclaim as they ministered in His name.

Mat 10:5-8 ESV These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, (6) but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (7) And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The **kingdom of heaven** is at hand.' (8) Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.

[*cp. Lk.10:9 and the sending out of the “72”]

At this time, there were not going to the gentiles, or non-Jewish people, but to the lost sheep of Israel. Paul referred to this as “to the Jew first, and then to the Gentiles”.(Rom.1:16)

The present, literal reality

There is a strong position today in Christianity, that the KoH is all

symbolic. The Kingdom is symbolic. The reign of Jesus Christ is figurative. The return of Jesus Christ was, (because there are some who believe Jesus has already returned, and we now live in the symbolic Kingdom, with Christ figuratively reigning in our hearts and lives.). But Jesus and the whole of Scripture teaches that the KoH is not symbolic, nor figurative, nor metaphorical. It is a present, literal Kingdom, which we are a part of, as believers in Jesus.

As we live under the literal Lordship of Jesus Christ today, we live as children of the King, under His literal Lordship and within His literal KoH. So now, Jesus our King, is literally ruling over His KoH in our hearts and lives, though at this present time, His reign is not its “fullness” In the future, however, Jesus will literally and physically, bodily return to earth and will rule and reign in the fullness of his power and glory, on earth, in perfect righteousness, through perfect justice, for 1,000 years.(Rev.20)

Jesus presently rules in the hearts of His people, as well as over all creation. Yet for now, His will is perfect, but His plan is being worked out and his power is voluntarily limited, until He comes to rule in all His fullness; not merely over His “believers” but over all the earth.

OUR KING & HIS KINGDOM EVIDENCE (Rev.21:2-5)

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus is teaching about our King Jesus, and the evidence He offers for His eternal kingdom. I find it very interesting, that as Jesus ministered, He preached the KoH and then would often heal the people there, as He did on the sermon on the mount; giving them a literal, present foretaste of the greater fullness of the KoH to come. In so doing, they would be left with a present longing for the future fullness of the coming, physical, literal KoH on earth, under King Jesus.

Jesus’ Earthly ministry practice

* When we take a closer look at Jesus earthly ministry practice, we see that he offers evidence of what His kingdom of Heaven will be like.

Rev 21:3-5 ESV (3) And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. (4) He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (5) And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

In Rev.21:2-5. In the New Heaven and New Earth, We have the promise of *no more pain, no more death, no more suffering, no more weeping or grieving; no more affliction or no more infirmities.* What do you think about that?

When Jesus taught about the KoH, he would often heal the sick or make the blind to see. He would cast out demons from those in bondage or raise someone from the dead. The idea was that from what he taught and the miracles the people experienced – which were the KoH manifestations – the people were then left with a foretaste of what the coming KoH would be like and instilled with a deep longing for the fullness of that kingdom to come.

“Yes Lord. If this is what you’re talking about, then let it be so!”

A Foretaste of Heaven

Jesus’ earthly ministry would have imparted a deep spiritual longing for the reality of His heavenly kingdom which was to come. Do we have it? Do we have a longing for God’s Kingdom to come and to be manifest among us? What would it take to nurture that longing in our hearts today??

Luk 17:12ff (12) And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance (13) and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

At one point in Jesus ministry, 10 people consumed with Leprosy came to him and were pleading for mercy. They were pleading for healing; Pleading for their lives to be spared. Perhaps unknowingly, they were

pleading for Jesus to allow them to experience a foretaste of His KoH, right now, in their present situation. As we read through this passage we see the Leper's plea (v12). "Have Mercy on us!"

Then in v.14) the 10 lepers were cleansed; miraculously healed and their lives were spared. They all ran off, joyfully whole. They were privileged to experience a foretaste of heaven on earth and what that will one day be like. No more pain. No more diseases. No more affliction or death. Bear in mind that all 10 were healed and all 10 had their lives spared.

Then in v.15), only one of the Lepers actually returned to Jesus to offer his appreciation for what He had done. .

v.20) Pharisees questioned;

Luk 17:20-21 ESV Being asked by the Pharisees, 'when would the kingdom of God come'. He answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, (21) nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."

Here in Luke chapter 17, Jesus' words are most often interpreted in either 1 of 2 ways. (1) Either He was referring to God working and ruling within or inside a person; a literal, inner, spiritual **Kingdom of Heaven**, where God ruled and the believer submitted to the Lordship of Christ, in his or her heart and life. (2) Or, that Jesus Himself, and his very presence as the King of the KoH, was in their midst, or He was physically among them. Therefore the KoH ITSELF, was actually in their midst or right there presently among them at that very moment.

While it is often viewed as one or the other, I tend to view it as being more of a combination of the two. One is the present, literal, though unseen reign of Christ. The other is the fuller, future, bodily reign of Jesus over the earth.

As Jesus ministered; People did not hear his teaching regarding the promises of KoH, then experience the healings from their afflictions and infirmities and then think: "Oh No. I'm healed. Oh what bummer. I guess that's what the eternal KoH, in the presence of God will be like.

All my pain and all my suffering are gone. OH No. All my suffering, all my unspeakable grief, all my inexpressible losses, all removed; all redeemed; all healed and made right. “Well if that’s what the KoH is like then you can count me out! I don’t want any part of that.”

QQ: Do we think that was their sentiment? Are you kidding me? That sounds absurd right? With their physical ailments healed; with their demons cast out and peace and relief received; with their dead raised, their grief comforted, with all those things Jesus made right and with all the foretaste of the fullness of God’s coming KoH, presently in their very midst; their response would be, “Oh God, *Thy Kingdom Come..*” And you can bet your sweet niblets, they would looong for the day when they would experience that fullness of the literal, eternal kingdom of Heaven, that the foretaste of His miracles had provided.

Q: Where are we today? Does the church of Jesus Christ today, long for the fullness of Christ’s KoH, under the righteous reign and Lordship of Jesus Christ? Our culture today, is pretty effective in quenching heaven’s spiritual interests with its present pleasures and attractions.

Q: Has God helped you this past year? Has He answered a prayer or met a specific need? Has he shown Himself present and faithful to you? Some think: “I got what I wanted from God; so we’re done. However God has met you or helped you, that is just a foretaste of the greater fullness of what life can be like with Jesus Christ as our Lord and King.

The state of people’s hearts today, remind me of John’s words about Jesus in John chapter 1.

Joh 1:10-13 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. (11) He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. (12) But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, (13) who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

People had differing responses to Jesus while he was on earth. Today, people have a variety of responses to the gospel message. Some believe

in Him and receive His salvation, while others simple don't. For whatever reason, some neglect, reject, ignore or put off putting their faith firmly and fully in Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Where are you today?



SERIES: "The Narrow Way" Jan.12, 2020

Sermon Title: **"Heart for the Kingdom"**



INTRO: The so-called psychology experts tell us there are a variety of personality types. Some are introverts, some are extroverts; some are thoughtful some are brash, some are organized some are unorganized; some of peaceful and kind, while others are brash and cold. Probably for most of us, the bottom line boils down to that which characterizes a person as either a pleasant or unpleasant personality type.

Today, Scripture begins answering the question: "What will it be like to live as citizens of the KoH?"

THE BLESSINGS OF THE POOR IN SPIRIT (Mat.5:1

* In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus turns our understanding aright, regarding our thoughts and perceptions of God's Kingdom of Heaven. This study of Kingdom attitudes makes the case, that attitudes among Christians, such as: "Woe is me, for I have nothing!" or "Poor, poor pitiful me, for I am a nobody" - - has no place in the heart of a Christian, and in fact is detrimental to spiritual maturity and effective ministry.

While It is true, that without Christ we can do nothing and are nothing. Nevertheless, Church of Jesus Christ – We are NOT without Christ!! So to be sorrowful that we have nothing, or don't have what we'd prefer or feel we are a nobody, is ultimately grieving over worldly things, that often cause us dissatisfaction with being citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matthew 6:33, instructs us to "seek first the kingdom of God..."

Mat 5:1-3 ESV (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.

"Blessed.... " Today I'd like to address what I see as a misperception of what it means to be "*blessed*". Some define "blessed"

as being happy and which is an emotion, based typically on how we feel and dependent upon our pleasant or unpleasant circumstances. But as I understand it, “Blessed” refers to being an Undeserving recipients of God’s unmerited favor or grace. .

I ask that you follow me through a brief study of the word, “Blessed”. We often hear this translated as “happy”. You may have a version of the Bible which reads, “Happy are the poor in Spirit...”

The Word “blessed” – (*makários*): to be enlarged; as when God *extends* His *benefits*; the advantages of receiving what God bestows; The NT Lexicon renders "blessed"; as describing a believer in an *enviable* or "fortunate" position from receiving *God's provisions or as a recipient of His divine favor*:

In our Christian culture, we often determine our personal state of blessedness, by how pleasant, comfortable or easy our life is. “Blessed” is how we feel when someone pays for your food at a restaurant, or if we get a raise we were praying for.

Yet the overall Biblical concept of God’s blessedness is the idea of God extending His grace and enlarging His benefits towards someone. Therefore the term “bless”, closely associates the unconditional grace of God, with the persevering faith of a believer.

What we don’t tend to hear is: “My house burned down. I’m so blessed.” Or “I didn’t get that job I was praying. Praise the Lord I am so blessed.” We don’t hear that or say that, but perhaps we should! Because, Happy is how we feel due to certain circumstances. Blessed is our state of being, fully and completely due to what God has done for us, and for who we are as children of His kingdom of Heaven.

I did not get the job I prayed for. Nevertheless, I am blessed. My house burned down. Nevertheless, I rejoice for I am blessed. Being blessed is unrelated to our experiences or emotions and is a present, literal state of being, undeserving yet fortunate, because of Who God is, what He has done, and how much of His undeserving grace we have received as His

children. Blessed is more of an unchanging quality in our ever changing and often unpleasant lives.

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit

* Therefore, happy is how we feel based on what we experience. Blessed is an unconditional, unchangeable state of being, which is based on our relationship with God through Jesus Christ, as citizens of His kingdom of heaven. Also, the blessing of God, is not based on the person's own awareness of or feeling or evaluation of that blessed state, but rather upon Heaven's evaluation. This Beattitude, "Blessed are the poor in Spirit" is not a confession from any individual, but is a divine declaration which adjusts our attitude, aright.

Interestingly the fullness referred to in Blessed, is linked or contrasted to the description of being "Poor in Spirit". "Blessed are the Poor in Spirit", is for certain, not the person's own perspective here, but is Heaven's perspective.

"**Blessed** are the Poor in Spirit" refers to being appropriately humble; without pride or pretense, without nurturing an attitude of "woe is me, I am nothing."

"**Poor**" = speaks of a lower, physical posture; or to crouch; the idea is the description of a beggar. The 10 Leper who Jesus healed, didn't have much room for pride or pretense; only a humble awareness of their desperate state of absolute helplessness, unless Jesus stepped in with a foretaste of the KoH. and healed them.

Mat 18:1-4 ESV At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the **kingdom of heaven**?" (2) And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them (3) and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the **kingdom of heaven**. (4) Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the **kingdom of heaven**."

Pride is an unrestrained development of selfishness. Jesus let them know that is no question for a child of the Kingdom to be concerned with.

Become like a child. Warren Wiersbe said, “we need to become like a child – not child*ish*, but child*like*”. Humble.

A beggar doesn’t have a lot of pretense; he is what he is. Not much room for pride, only an appropriate self-perception of one’s spiritual depravity; physical brokenness or financial poverty. “Poor in Spirit” is a summary of our overall human need for God’s all-encompassing mercy and grace.

You want to be great you say? Become as humble as a small child. Then you will be great in God’s Kingdom. Humility or Poor in Spirit is a great quality in the Kingdom of Heaven and these people are greatly blessed from heaven’s perspective.

Prov.3:34 ESV Toward the scornful he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor (or extends grace, or blessing).

1Pet. 5:5-6 ESV (5) Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (6) Therefore, Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may lift you up, [James 4:6]

The Present Reality of being blessed

* “Blessed” is an unchangeable state of being for the believer in Christ and child of the KoH.

This person is not blessed because they sort of “Woke” and all of a sudden realized they were blessed. They are blessed, even when they did not realize they were blessed. Being Blessed doesn’t simply describe something that happens to us, nor does it describe a perspective or positive mindset we have ascended to. More accurately it describes our state of being from heaven’s perspective because of who we are in Christ, and because of what Christ has done and gained for us, through the cross, resurrection and exaltation at the right hand of God as King of the Kingdom of Heaven and Ruler of all creation.

Eph 1:3 ESV Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with **every spiritual blessing in the heavenly** places, in Christ.

Q: So why are they blessed? **A:** Because (for) theirs is the KoH. They are citizens of the KoH. They / we are children of the King of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Notice the Literal Present reality of the Poor in Spirit. “Blessed” has no time frame attached to it. There is no statute of limitations restricting it. There are no expectations qualifying it! Blessed **ARE** the poor in Spirit, because theirs **IS** the KoH. These are in a present, ongoing, indefinite, perpetual state of being blessed, whether they realize it or not, because this is not something promised to them in the future, but a literal, unchanging reality at this present moment. Why”? because they are part of the literal KoH.

Imagine for a moment, if this was referring to a symbolic or figurative KoH. Their blessedness is dependent upon them being residents of the KoH. So if the KoH was symbolic or figurative, then that would mean their state of blessedness would also be symbolic or figurative.

So when people asked you; “How are you doing today?” You would answer, “I’m blessed, symbolically speaking of course.” “Hey the devil can’t defeat me, I am metaphorically blessed, because I figuratively, a child, of the allegorical KoH.”

All that implying that you have no idea how you are really doing, or what on earth are the genuine promises of God for eternity, because evidently none of this is real; none of this is a part of any reality; and offers no assurance of encouragement for my life’s journey.

AND furthermore, if the KoH is symbolic or figurative, then what does that say about the King of the KoH? You see where all this takes us. It takes us to a land of imaginary stories, concepts; fictitious hopes where nothing is real and nothing is for certain.

“Blessed are the Poor in Spirit for their’s *is* the KoH”. This was not given as a futuristic **prophecy**. It was not even given as a **promise**,

because in Scripture, virtually every promise is linked with a necessary condition for that promise to take effect or to be experienced. It was more of a statement of reassurance of a present, literal; unconditional reality, for every true believer in Jesus Christ, regardless of human ability, social status, wealth or poverty; fame or obscurity; appearance or performance. This is the Truth for all the unnamed, unknown, unnoticed believers in Jesus Christ and those unrecognized humble Kingdom servants around the world and throughout time, and perhaps in this church.

Christian: This reassurance is to the Poor in Spirit or the humble. You do not need to ring your own bell or toot your own horn. You need not fight for your place in society nor sing you own praises. Heaven knows. Heaven knows.

And regardless of your circumstances or troubles, or the difficulty of your journey; Rest assured that your destination is certain and your hope is secure in Jesus Christ.

“Narrow is the Gate (or entryway), and troublesome is the way (or the journey), that leads to life...”

Examples of the KoH of being Poor in Spirit

(i.) The worst of the Worst – Tax Collector

Luk 18:10-14 ESV (10) "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. (11) The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. (12) I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' (13) But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' (14) I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Can you imagine being part of that prayer meeting? People thanking God that they are not like the dirty scoundrel that is on his knees praying right next to you? How would that turn out?

* Simply put: “Humility gets heaven’s attention and gains God’s blessing. So the Pharisees were the “keepers of the Law”. They were part of the religious elite, the spiritual Hot Shots of the Jewish world. This Pharisee prayed to God, with pride in his heart, thanking God that he was not like the sinful tax collector. He even went on to toot his own horn and innumerate all the reasons he felt he was better than the rest. In fact, if you think about it, why did he even come to pray in the first place? For others to see and hear him pray.



In contrast, the sinful tax collector was repentant and poor in Spirit or humble. He had an appropriately humble view of himself and of his own spiritual need and plead for mercy. He wouldn’t even open his eyes and look up, due to his own humility. One was blowing hot air. The other was doing business with God.

Just to be clear here. The Hot Shot religious leader is not our example here. The Humble tax collecting sinner is our example.

(ii.) The Church of Laodicea – Luke Warm

* The forest is nothing more than the sum total of all the trees. Likewise, the church is the sum total of all the individuals in the church. A loving church comes from the individuals in the church, being loving and demonstrating loving kindness.

Rev 3:14-19 ESV "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation. (15) 'I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! (16) So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. (17) For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. (18) I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so

that you may see. (19) Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

The presence of pride tends to cause us to overlook our own need and shortcomings. The absence of humility blinds us to the fact that we are desperately in need and are not better than any other person.

Cold and hot being the extremes, but “lukewarm” is more of a fence straddling standpoint, which possess no opposition, but presents no passion either. King of Keeping a low profile, keep the status quo, don’t disagree with anyone; kind of a “whatever” mindset. Nothing really matters.

Evidently the church of Laodicea had more religious hot shots, than it had humble repentant sinners seeking God’s mercy. Every church typically has a bit of a balance of all kinds, but unfortunately the church of Laodicea had an imbalance of the arrogant, hot shots who can’t see their own need, but clearly see the needs and weaknesses of others.

CONCLUSION & *Our Prayer focus for this New Year*

God We Need you!

Psa 40:17 ESV As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God!

Realize that this Psalm describes the state of each of us here today; but not necessarily the attitude of each of us here today.

(1) Acknowledge – “As for me, I am poor and needy”; he is humble and poor in spirit. No pride. No pretense. Just needy.

(2) Confidence – “You are my only help and my deliverer”; God is my only Help and my only Hope. I cannot help myself. I am not self-reliant. I am hopelessly helpless, unless God helps me.

(3) Dependence – “do not delay, O my God!”; A desperate, dependent Humble plea for the manifestation of grace and and preservation of lifelife. Repent from self-reliance. Turn to God in humility. Make you plea to Him. Await His reply.



SERIES: "The Narrow Way"
Sermon Title: "Good Grief"
INTRODUCTION

Jan.19, 2020
Text: Mat.5:4

Q¹: What do you think the Kingdom of Heaven will be like? (Now were you thinking about the KoH as a place or destination or as the present reign of Jesus in our lives today?)

Q²: What would happen today, if King Jesus was fully surrendered to and completely ruled over the hearts and lives of every professing, believing Christian on planet earth?

Lk. 6:17 - The Beattitudes were Jesus' teaching to (1) the "12", (2) possibly the 70+ disciples, and (3) the throngs, possibly 500+, seeking, interested, believers, unbelievers, skeptics, curious followers, and people seeking help and healing.

Today, Scripture begins answering the question: What will it be like to live as citizens of the KoH? I believe, Christ desires our Character as children of the KoH, to be examples to others of what the KoH will be like; or our attitudes would give others a foretaste of the fuller Kingdom of heaven, ¹when God fully reigns and the Lordship of Christ pervades and affects our attitudes in how we view and treat others; ²when the KoH molds our perspective on the importance of living what we believe, and ³motivates us toward Heavenly pursuits and Kingdom oriented priorities.

REMEMBER:

(1) The Beattitudes are all about our hearts being aligned with God's heart and understanding what the KoH will be like.

(2) "Blessed" does not refer to being happy, but being an undeserving recipient, of God's unmerited grace and/or favor.

(3) the KoH is not merely a reference to Heaven as our eternal dwelling place, but God's present Lordship over our lives today, as citizen's of King Jesus' eternal kingdom reign.

The Sermon on the Mount, is Jesus teaching about...

THE K.O.H. INCLUDES ALL GOD'S CREATION

* The Kingdom of Heaven refers to God ruling and reigning over all His creation.

Rev 14:6-7 ESV Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. (7) And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and **give him glory**, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

God's Rule and Reign

* All of what God has created, He presently rules and reigns over. And all God's creation gives Him glory.

(i.) He rules Over all Creation

If we read through the book of Revelation, you discover that God is in control over everything that happens. It is God who holds the scroll in His hand. It is the Lord Jesus, Son of God who breaks the 7 seals and opens the scroll. It is heaven who calls forth the contents of the scroll. It is God's angels who sound the 7 trumpets. It is God's angels who hold and control the 7 bowls with 7 plagues. And it is heaven's voice that instructs the angels to pour out the contents of those vials of wrath and judgment. All of this, indicating God is in full and absolute control over all that transpires in that book.

(ii.) He Rules over the will and lives of believers

Time and time again, Scripture assures us that God did not create everything *then*, and *now* sort of sits back watching what will happen, doing practically nothing. But that God has created all that is, and that He is presently, actively and faithfully sustaining and ruling over all He has created.(Heb.1:3; Col.1:16-17) Presently, all the forces of heaven and hell are ruled by the power of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

REVIVALS ARE FORETASTES OF GOD'S COMING KoH

* When humans trust in Jesus Christ and receive His salvation, they place themselves under the Lordship or under the reign of Jesus Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Rev 14:6-7 ESV (6) Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. (7) And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and **give him glory**, because the hour of his **judgment** has come, and worship him who **made** heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

"To God be the glory".. Why? "Great Things He **has done**". In fact we might well add a couple extra verses to that song that proclaims, "Great things he **Is presently** doing" and "Great things HE **will continue doing** in the future".

Revival is something God continues to do, unscheduled and unexpected in human history. So when God intervenes in human history or earthly life, and brings about revival and changes lives, restored families, revived churches, transformed communities and as history has described on occasion, even entire continents...; He leaves the earth, with a temporary, limited, abbreviated, hint of a glimmer of what the KoH will be like. And as we experience those times, or at least read about them we are left wanting more. We are left asking, "God do that in our day, in our community, in our church".

God will be glorified, when at the end times, according to God's promises, God will intervene once again in human history, and bring about salvation to many, as well as judgment upon sin, and the ushering in of His righteous reign and righteous Kingdom authority over the peoples of the earth.

At that time, God's plan will more clearly unfold and His will, will be more fully accomplished, and in greater measure than the world has known in the last 2000 yrs. And when Gods' will is done on earth, it leaves the inhabitants of earth with a foretaste of what God's eternal

Kingdom in heaven will be like. “Yes Lord. Thy kingdom come... in our day”

Rom 4:18-21 ESV In hope he [Abraham] believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." (19) He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. (20) No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, (21) fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

When God promised Abraham he would have a son, and Abraham's faith grew so that, before his wife conceived, Abraham gave glory to God, for what He was convinced He was going to do; that being miraculously working on earth, to bring about His will on earth, as it is done in heaven.

During Revivals, People typically are brought to conviction and are moved to repentance for their sins; they trust in Jesus Christ and they bring glory to God. And that is a foretaste of what God's kingdom of Heaven can and will be like.

Some say Prayer and repentance brings about Revival. But I believe earnest prayer and genuine repentance themselves, don't occur until the ground swell of Revival has already begun.

REFLECTIONS OF GOD'S HEART AND HOME

* The Beattitudes are all about the state of being blessed, at all times, as children of God's Kingdom of Heaven. They reflect God's eternal heart and home.

Psa 91:1-2 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. (2) I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

Experiencing God at Work

When abiding in the presence of God we experience Him at work. The Beattitudes are not so much about what God will do for us, as they are simply about living as children of that kingdom, with a present awareness of His abiding presence in our lives, and our lives being transformed as a result of that.

In His Presence is peace and security

* God is our Shelter and His nearness to us is reflected in His shadow being cast over us. The Shelter and Shadow of our Refuge and Fortress, impart peace and hope in every believer that we may trust Him fully in every situation. “My God, in Whom I trust.”

Every experience with God, nurtures a deeper faith in God.

The Sermon on the Mount, is Jesus teaching about...

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN

Q: What are some things that cause us to grieve or mourn? (allow congregation to answer aloud) Death. Disappointment with people or with God. Guilt: over wrong choices and/or wrong action taken. Regret: due to our guilt. Loss of job, house burning down or a relationship that has ended. Personal mental, physical, emotional or spiritual brokenness can cause us grief and bring about mourning.

Mat 5:4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”
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Mourn” – to feel grief: the emotion of regret from experiencing loss; especially when things in this earthly life, don’t align with the purpose of God under His present kingdom reign. Grief might be felt at the loss of important possessions, meaningful relationships, or missed opportunities.

This can be due to things that affect us directly or indirectly. Terrorist Bombings. Community Shootings. Babies aborted. Children enslaved. Women in sex trafficking. Racism. Persecution. Any or all these can cause us to mourn.

God promises His Personal Intervention

* Blessed **ARE** those who mourn, for (because) they **SHALL** be comforted. We grieve when we see injustice or when we experience violence. We may mourn when people are abused or when there is disrespect; when we see or experience blatant sin. Even when we personally experience deep conviction over sin, we may be moved to mourning and grief. .

Mat 5:4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed.... Because they shall be comforted. The blessing is in the act of being comforted and even greater in the One who will be doing the comforting. And it seems that It seems, God Himself will be our Comfort.

Psa 23:3-4 ESV (3) He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (4) Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they **comfort** me.

The shepherd's rod would be a weapon of protection for the sheep, against their enemies. The shepherd's staff would be an instrument of guiding and directing the sheep in the righteousness path, the Shepherd has chosen. Both the weapon of protection, as well as the rod of direction brings comfort.

God's Presence: He leads us in paths of righteousness for his name sake. He protects us in the presence of our enemies. We are at peace as we trust fully in Him. His overall rule brings comfort, security, safety, and assurance regardless of our circumstances.

God promises Its All Temporary

“Blessed **ARE** those who mourn, for they **SHALL** be comforted.”

Rev 21:3-5 (4) He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” (5) And he who was

seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”

Mourning will not last forever, though at the time, it may seem like it. Even while it seems that the world is deteriorating, nevertheless, under His kingdom rule, God is presently making all things new. IN God’s eternal KoH, there will be No more grief; crying; pain; or death. “ He WILL wipe away our tears. There WILL be no more cxyring. There WILL be no more pain. Jesus promises I WILL make all things new”?? NO. I AM makng all things new. Present. Literal. Hopefilled.

Imagine if Jesus promised: I am symbolically making all things new? I have a figurative home for you? I am metaphorically offering assurance and comfort? Things will be different, better... allegorically speaking of course.

If that were the case then our comfort would also be just as symbolic and just as non-literal. But on that great day, our greatest loss and our deepest regret, may result from refraining to surrender all of life, every part of body, life, past and future. Our Greatest Loss will be from realizing we did not give all and could have surrendered more; holding onto so much of this earthly existence, possessions, personal pursuits; realizing we withheld worship, total submission, self-denial; when He is so worthy to have received so much more from us, in this life, but we didn’t.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” God promises our mourning will be temporary.

Ecc 3:1-4 ESV For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: (2) a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; (3) a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; (4) a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to mourn, and weep and long for the KoH, but it is only for a time. At the moment of grief, there will be mourning; a time of weeping; a time of realizing the toll of sin and brokenness in our world and the

colossal **LOSS** of lives that are yet to experience the fullness of the Kingdom of Heaven.

We see glimmers of it. We may experience a foretaste of those things. We may have an abbreviated time of suffering in this life. Nevertheless we hold onto the promise that grief and mourning are but for a time. Thank God it is but for a time.

Oh if they would only repent from their Christless, hopeless sinful lives and humbly trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior and King. Oh the present, momentary grief and mourning and loss. Yet oh the Longing for our heavenly home in the future, as well as for Christ's present Lordship to fill this physical earth, bringing hope, righteousness, comfort and peace, to our lives, in our day.

God promises Blessings for "Good Grief"

* "Good Grief": Where does that even come from?

(1) Grief over wrongdoing is Good Grief and will be blessed.

We presently mourn over events and experiences that are wrong and in contrast to God's desire in His Kingdom of Heaven.

PETER: In Mat. 26:75, when Peter denied his Lord, and immediately heard the roster crow, we are told that he immediately mourned and wept. That was Good Grief, because it led Peter to be sorrowful for his denial of Jesus and to repent.

JESUS: When Jesus looked over Jerusalem and how they rejected Him, He was grieved.

Luk 19:40-41 ESV He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." (41) And when he drew near and saw the city, he **wept** over it,

Mat 23:36-37 ESV Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. (37) "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have

gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!

Jesus wept over Jerusalem at their rejection of Him. Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus over the effects of sin.

** Grief over wrong doing is Good Grief and will be blessed.*

(2) Grief over our own sin is Good Grief and will be blessed.

** Good grief occurs when we are made acutely aware of our own sinful tendencies and respond with Godly, spiritual grief.*

2Cor. 7:8-11 ESV For even if I made you **grieve** with my letter, I do not regret it--though I did regret it, for I see that that letter **grieved** you, though only for a while. (9) As it is, I rejoice, not because you were **grieved**, but because you were **grieved** into **repenting**. For you felt a **godly grief**, so that you suffered no loss through us. (10) For **godly grief** produces a **repentance** that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly **grief** produces death. (11) For see what earnestness this godly **grief** has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

The Holy Spirit's conviction over sin, may lead us to grieve over our own personal sin. This is grief that we experience when we have sinned against God and offended His holiness. And that grief may lead to Godly sorry which in turn can result in personal repentance.

** Grief over our own sin is Good Grief and will be blessed.*

(3) Grief expressed in longing is Good Grief and will be blessed by God's own Comfort in His own Home.

*** We presently rejoice over events** and experiences that are in line with the will and reign of Jesus Christ in this present life. Things like justice for the wronged, compassion toward the suffering; healing for the afflicted; or even some kind of reward for goodness and righteousness.

Our praise reports, cause us to rejoice in God's intervention in the lives of those around us; which displays God's righteousness, causes us to get a glimpse of the KoH, while still on earth; and to be reminded that one day in the fullness of Christ's coming KoH, all will finally and fully be made new.

Behold, I **AM** making all things new." (Rev.21:5)

Blessed **ARE** those who mourn, for they **SHALL** be comforted. (Mat.5:4)

Scripture offers a reminder that this is not our home; we are not home yet. We are not to long for the things of this world, but should allow the troubles and grief of this temporary painful existence, to cause us to long for our eternal glorious home with Him.

Joh 14:1-4 ESV "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. (2) In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (4) And you know the way to where I am going."

God is preparing a place for us; a place of peace, purity, righteousness, justice, security, glory and pleasure in His eternal holy presence.

Psa 16:8-11 ESV I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. (9) Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. (10) For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. (11) You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are *pleasures forevermore*.

** Grief expressed in longing is Good Grief and will be blessed by God's own Comfort in His own Home.*

CONCLUSION:

IN Christ today, there is comfort from God Himself. He is our Grief Taker; our Burden Bearer; our Joy Restorer; our Comfort Given. In

Christ's kingdom to come, there will be no more need for comfort, as there will be no more offenses, regrets, losses, or such problems.

* We are using Ps.40:17 as a Prayer in which we can pray through these Beattitudes. Today we look at this passage in light of our focus on mourning.

Psa 40:17 ESV As for me, ¹[I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me]. ²[You are my help and my deliverer]; ³[do not delay, O my God!]

¹I am poor and needy; That is acknowledging our desperate need. No pride or pretense. *“Oh God I am poor and needy and full of grief. My heart is mourning and my spirit is heavy. I am empty and at the end of my rope. I need you.”*

²You are my Help and Deliverer; that is a confident dependence upon God is my only Help and my only Hope. Realization there is no way I can make things right. *“Lord you have promised blessing and comfort. Be my Comfort Giver in my time of grief. Help me bear this unbearable burden of inexpressible sorrow.”*

³Do not Delay, Oh my God: This is a desperate, humble plea – “Do Not delay, Oh My God”. Do not delay in manifesting your grace and extending your help in my life. *“Oh My God. Hear my outcry. I am desperate for your help. I am dependent upon you. If you do not comfort me, I cannot be comforted. Come now, Oh God and do not delay in hearing and answering my prayer for your comfort in my life”*
“And...may we not delay in submitting to your Lordship in our lives.”
-Amen!



SERIES: “The Narrow Way”

Jan.26, 2020

Sermon Title: “**Reflecting Christ’s Character**”



Text: Mat.5:5

“Blessed are the Meek, for they shall inherit the earth”

Q: In our culture, do we tend to admire and pedestalize people who are **meek**? Is there anyone you know, who is so meek, that you’d really like to emulate him/her? Do we have any super heroes whose super powers are meekness? “It’s a bird; it’s a plane; No, it’s **Meek Man**”. I don’t think so. We just don’t seem to admire “meekness”.

INTRODUCTION Perhaps show *Wizard of OZ* Video clip, where Dorothy introduces herself to the Great and Mighty Oz, as “Dorothy, the Small and *Meek*”

Some may consider being Christ-like as being unattractive and weak in manliness. Some feel that Jesus was a pushover, and weak and was someone who would not stand up to those who were persecuting Him or did not have the courage to defend himself against those who crucified him.

“Blessed are the poor in Spirit”. “Blessed are those who Mourn”.

“Blessed are the Meek”. Today we consider the trait of *Meekness*.

The Sermon on the Mount, is Jesus teaching about...

AN HONORABLE TRAIT

* Meekness is an honorable trait in The KoH

Mat 5:5 ESV “**Blessed are the meek**, for they shall inherit the earth.”

* The “Beattitudes” refer to those who are blessed; is not a promise of something that is going to happen, but is a declaration of their present state of being blessed.

Blessed are the Meek

Q: Do you consider yourself to be a “Meek” person? Do you want to be a Meek person?

Everyone who is meek, is not expected to be exactly like another person who is meek. But Meekness can be demonstrated in any and all personality types. Meekness is not determined by whether you are an *introvert* or an *extrovert*, but by whether or not you are a genuine *convert* to the Lord Jesus and have experienced a changed heart and perspective.

*** What exactly is meant by a meek spirited person?**

- Its ***not*** someone who is an introvert or who has a natural quietness about them.
- Meekness is ***not*** a personality type that is easy pushover or easily bullied and mocked and they just kind of grin and bear it.

“***Meek***” is often translated “Gentle” in the New Testament. One commentary states: “A ***meek*** spirit is a calm and stable demeanor, amidst the troubles or influences of life. ([1Pe 3:4](#)); (BI)

Meek, may be Someone who is strong enough to demonstrates self-control, so as not to get caught up in the frantic influences around her or him. Perhaps someone who doesn’t get their feathers ruffled too easily. Meekness may refer to someone who does not have knee-jerk reactions to the provoking forces or personalities around them.

When we think of Meekness, we think of meekness towards God, as well as meekness towards other people.

Meekness towards God...

I. May be identified by Submission to His will.

A) It may refer to carrying one’s selves calmly or without murmuring, under the outworkings of God’s plan, which may conflict with our own plans.

B) A Meek person may have the attitude of: “Let God do what He wills with me; I *will* submit.”

Q: Now Do you consider yourself a Meek Person?

II. Meekness might also be demonstrated in a person’s life by our Receptivity and Response to Gods Holy Word.

Jas 1:21 ESV Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with **meekness** the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

* Meek is closely associated with Poor in Spirit or humility.

A Meek person is He who willingly conforms himself to the mind of God, and does not quarrel with the instructions Scripture.

We would consider a meek person to be one who is not defiant towards the written word of God. Have you ever heard people make excuses why they don't obey Scripture in a specific area? Maybe they are harboring a personal pet sin, and rather than acknowledge the sin and repent from it, they make statements like: "Well God's word doesn't surely mean that. I think he probably meant something more along the lines of". Or "Well God may have said that, but that was a long time ago; and anyway God knows my heart and He's not going to cause the ground to open up and swallow me, is he?"

A Meek person is not defiant but spiritually receptive and will be responsive to God's convicting word.

Q: So, do you consider yourself to be a "Meek" person?

Meekness towards other people

I. In prosperity: a **meek** and humble person does not compare her or himself with others; they are not puffed up regarding their own good fortune. Meekness is not self-promoting or exalting.

II. A meek person does not consider herself better because of her position or possessions; or due to her appearance or abilities. Instead Meekness Looks upon the good things she possesses as a gift from God.

III. Neither does Meekness view his position or possessions as being the reward of his own merit. "I make things happen. I get things done." "I am a self-made man."

IV. In adversity: a meek person will not seek revenge, but will humbly pursue peace.

V. The Meek will also take note of the misfortune of others and will not look down in judgment, but will feel compassion.

*** Q: Do you consider yourself to be a “*Meek*” person?**

QQ: Are you willing to become a *Meek* person?

Make no mistake about it, meekness is an honorable trait.

Our Shared Likeness

* Meekness is our shared likeness & position in Christ. So what is the benefit of being Meek?

Meekness is a trait of Jesus’ demeanor

<p>Mat. 11:28-30 (ESV) (28) Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."</p>
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Meekness is a trait of the Kingdom of Heaven and a shared trait with our Lord Jesus Himself. And it is the Father’s will that we, be molded into the likeness of His Son, Jesus.

<p>Rom. 8:29 (ESV) For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.</p>
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Our behavior and the KoG

* When we evidence the character of Christ in our attitudes and behavior; whether they realize it or not, others are left with a slight foretaste of the KoH and what the King of that Kingdom is like.

*** Q: Do you consider yourself to be a “*Meek*” person?**

Q: Are you willing to be a reflection to others, of what our King and His Kingdom will be like?

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE MEEK....

* Why are the Meek blessed again?

Mat 5:5 ESV "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

"Inherit the Earth"

* "Blessed" is not a promise of being blessed if you do this, or become that, or act a particular way. Blessed is not a promise of something that is going to happen, but is a declaration of their present state of being blessed, because of the fact that they are presently heirs of the "earth" to come.

Being Meek is being satisfied with humble means, while being assured of eternal kingdom riches and privileges. Bible Scholars often interpret this in at least one of two ways:

Mat 5:5 ESV "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Inherit the earth...

(1) May be a reference to the Jewish believers being assured that they will be recipients of the promise of God upon the nation of Israel, in inheriting the "Promised Land".

Psa 37:11 ESV But *the meek shall inherit the land* and delight themselves in abundant peace.

In Genesis 13, God tells Abram to look North, then South, then East, then West. Whatever real estate he saw and wherever he would walk would become his, or ultimately would become the geographic nation of the people of Israel. And though they may become displaced, yet they will one day, fully receive and live in the land God promised to the Jewish people.

Or it could refer to...

(2) All believers in Christ being assured of their part in God's economy in the New Heavens and New Earth (Rev.21:1ff)

It seems the word can be translated with or "land", as it would refer to Israel, or the Earth, as it would refer to sharing in the future reign with Christ on earth, during His 1,000 year reign on earth, following the battle of Armageddon.(Rev.20:1-4)

Note:

5:3 – Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, for theirs is *the KoH*.

5:5 – blessed are the Meek for they shall inherit *the earth*.

Why is one blessed, who receives the KoH, but the other receives the Earth? Which is the best?

It seems that these both point to the same blessing. Because I believe this to be a reference to the Kingdom of Heaven, on earth, following the Final Battle of the Tribulation, when Jesus returns and sets up His kingdom of heaven Reign on earth for 1,000 yrs.

The writer of Hebrews states that the OT heroes of the faith, did not hold onto the things of this world very tightly, but were looking forward and heavenward, to God's home and their eternal dwelling. After mentioning many heroes of the faith in the Old Testament the writer states:

Heb 11:13-16 ESV (11) These all died in faith, not having received the *things promised*, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. (14) For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a *homeland*. (15) If they had been thinking of that *land* from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. (16) But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a *heavenly* one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a *city*.

These lived and died, trusting God for their eternal home yet to come. And Paul wrote to encourage Timothy, that our faithfulness to Christ, will be rewarded in the life to come.

2Ti 2:11-12 ESV (11)The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; (12) if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;

Later in Revelation, John writes, to encourage persecuted Christians that, regardless of how hard and painful this life of following Jesus Christ gets, we have an unshakable assurance of our unshakable reward in heaven.

Rev 3:21 ESV (21) The one who conquers, I will grant him to *sit with me on my throne*, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Rev 5:9-10 ESV (9) And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, (10) and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

It seems all these references point to what John saw and wrote regarding the reign of Christ in the coming millennia.

Rev 20:1-4 ESV (1) Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. (2) And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, (3) and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. (4) Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Rev 22:3-5 ESV (3) No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. (4) They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. (5) And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

*** Q: Do you consider yourself to be a “Meek” person?**

QQ: Are you willing to become a Meek person?

“Blessed are the Meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” For those who do not go through this life, forcefully taking what they want, but rather

humbly trust God and allow Him to provide and to lift up and to bless... They will receive a part in Jesus ruling for a thousand years in the KoH on earth, in the last days.

CONCLUSION:

* So Do you consider yourself to be a Meek person?

a Prayer for Meekness

Psa 40:17 ESV As for me, ¹[I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me]. ²[You are my help and my deliverer]; ³[do not delay, O my God!]

¹**I am poor and needy**; That is acknowledging our desperate need. No pride or pretense, regarding meekness. I am lacking in this area of Meekness. You have promised your blessing upon those who are Meek. Lord I want my life to bring you honor and good pleasure. I am lacking in Meekness in my life, and attitude, toward You and toward others.

²**You are my Help and Deliverer**; that is a confident dependence upon God is my only Help and my only Hope. I realize there is no way I can make things right. I can never become like Christ, by my own efforts. You are my Help and my Deliverer from my self-life.

³**Do not Delay, Oh my God**. This is a desperate, humble plea. “Do Not delay, Oh My God”. Do not delay in manifesting your grace and extending your help in my life, in putting aside my own pride and self-focused behavior. Form in me a humble heart and an attitude of meekness toward You and toward others.

Let us not delay to submit to your Lordship in our lives.



SERIES: "The Narrow Way" Feb.2, 2020

Sermon: "An Appetite for Righteousness"

Text: Mat.5:6 "Hungry / Thirsty Souls"

Theme: "Hungry & Thirsty for God's righteousness"



INTRODUCTION

Imagine you are in your back yard, digging up some ground in preparation for a new garden. And while you are digging, you suddenly hear a solid "thunk", as your shovel hits something more solid than the dirt. You dig more and work the dirt around until you realize you have unearthed a very old Treasure Chest. As you clean it off and open the clasp; as you begin to open the lid to look inside, what treasure are you hoping will be inside?



Our lesson today is about one of the greatest treasures on earth or in heaven.. It is something that everyone needs but few ever possess. It is the Treasure of "Righteousness".

* As Jesus traveled around the country side, teaching and proclaiming repentance and the *Kingdom of Heaven*; He would often heal afflictions, cast out demons, give sight to the blind or even raise the dead, leaving the people with a glimmer or a foretaste of what the *Kingdom of God* will one day be like, and would leave them longing for that kingdom to come in its fullness.

The Sermon on the Mount and specifically the section on the Beatitudes, is about our Christian blessings and the attitude we should have, as we interact with the world around us. And through our Christ-like attitudes, we would leave the world around us with a foretaste of the KoH.

Humility. Peace. Righteousness. Meekness. Joy. Mercy. Its enough to make any of us, long for the KoH to come into our lives, in our times.

Beatitude means Utmost bliss; Supreme blessedness. (Bible Dictionary)

For our study we think of the “Beatitudes” as Blessed Attitudes. As we consider today’s lesson, I’d like us to keep this question before us:

“What does my heart desire more than anything else?”

Today, The Beatitudes focus Jesus’ teaching about...

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

* Jesus teaches that the KoH on earth today, is about the Lordship of Jesus Christ, demonstrated through Christ’s likeness, in our dealings and interaction with the world around us.

Our Scripture text for today is:

Mat 5:6 ESV "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for **righteousness**, for they shall be satisfied.

Now let’s define **Righteousness**. It is that which is right before God; that which meets a particular standard or expectation. Righteousness can refer to prudent justice or moral virtue. It can refer to someone that is valued as or declared to be innocent. It is important to bear in mind that Righteousness is not a reference to sinless perfection, but rather a state or standing of one who has been justified by God.

The Bible says Noah, was a righteous man.(Gen.6:9) The Apostle John was referred to as righteous(Mk.6:20). At the time of Jesus birth, Simeon was a described as a righteous man(Lk.2:25). And Peter refers to Lot as a Righteous man.(2Pet.2:28)

I'd like us to consider Righteousness as the character and currency of the kingdom of heaven(KoH). **(1) Righteousness** is the character of the KoH, in that it is a trait that characterizes the place of heaven; it is a trait of God Himself, and it is that quality that God desires to characterize each person in His kingdom, as part of their lifestyle. It is to mark how we do business, how we treat others and it is to identify which kingdom we are part of.

(2) Righteousness is not only the character of heaven, but it is also the currency of the kingdom of Heaven. We can't get into heaven without righteousness. Heaven is full of Righteousness, but we as humans are void of it.

“For there is none that are righteous, no, not one.” (Rom.3:10)

Sin is what separates us from God and keeps us out of heaven. Righteousness on the other hand is what allows us to gain access into heaven. When a person expresses saving faith in Jesus Christ; **(a.) That which keeps us out of heaven**, our sin, is forgiven and taken out of the way. And **(b.) also when we trust Christ, that which gains us access** into heaven, that is Righteousness, is bestowed to us, as a gift.^[Eph.2:8]

When Abram believed God it was credited to him as Righteousness. (Gen.15:6). It was a heavenly quality bestowed to a needy human and becomes our currency, so to speak, for entering into the Kingdom of Heaven or into God's family.

Our text this morning informs us that we will be blessed, if we have a longing or a hunger for the righteousness of the Kingdom of Heaven, and a foretaste of Glory divine.

Jer 23:5 ESV "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

Isa 9:6-7 ESV (6) For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given. And His name shall be called, Wonderfu Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. (7) Of the increase of his **government** and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his **kingdom**, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this

The promise is that Jesus, the King of Heaven, will one day rule and reign over God's kingdom and over the citizens of that kingdom, in Righteousness. One day Christ will rule the physical earth in righteousness. Until then, Christ presently desires and deserves to rule the hearts of each of the citizens of His Kingdom.

Citizens of Heaven and Ambassadors of the Kingdom

* As citizens of the KoH, we are kingdom Ambassadors and Christ's representatives of His kingdom on earth. An ambassador represents a particular ruler or kingdom, in place of that ruler.

2Co 5:18-20 ESV (18) All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (20) Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

(i.) This is the King's mission: (v18a) "...God, through Christ, reconciled us to Himself". (v19) "...God was reconciling the world to Himself..." Many are separated from the King, so the King was busy reconciling the world to Himself.

(ii.) This is our co-mission: (v18) "...God...gave us the ministry of reconciliation." (v20) "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ..." To the believers in Christ, God extends the invitation or the calling, to join Him and be used by Him, and to take up the responsibility of being His representative of the message of salvation in Christ.

An Ambassador carries the message of his ruler. He speaks on behalf of that ruler. He/she is sent with the authority of that ruler. That ambassador acts in place of that ruler. So this is the mission of God, the

King of the Kingdom of Heaven. And our King has “entrusted” to us, the message and authority of the King to speak in His place.

So with that reality, as ambassadors we must get our priorities right.

Right Priorities

* The Blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven is directly related to how we have our priorities set on earth. It is crucial that we firmly and fully believe that the Narrow Way is genuinely the Best way; It is God’s way and the only way to life; and the Narrow Way is worth the struggle. And as we struggle through our journey, we must be clear as to what our priorities are. If there is any doubt regarding what our priorities should be as Christians, Jesus clarifies that for us in Mat.6.

Mat 6:33 ESV (33) But *seek first the kingdom of God* and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Seek first: (1) The King. (2) His Kingdom reign. (3) The Righteous Character of His Kingdom on the earth. Whether our priorities are set by our desires or our desires are formed by our priorities... I am not sure. But I do know they are closely associated.

Q: *So what is it your heart seeks first and desires most?*

Psa 37:3-6 ESV Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. (4) *Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires* of your heart. (5) Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. (6) He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

As children of the KoH; as we seek the Lord and desire Him above all other things; He will then reveal or display our Righteousness. This is a most hopeful passage; that is when our Delight is in the Lord, we will be satisfied. When we love the Lord with all our heart, and soul, and mind and strength.... Then we will be blessed and satisfied. When Jesus is Everything we want, then we will have everything we want – we will have the Desire of our heart.

When our priorities are right, we will delight in Righteousness and will seek His Kingdom and His Righteousness above all things. It will become our greatest Treasure of highest value.

Question: “So what is it your heart desires most?”

Answer: “Whatever takes up most of your time or occupies most of your thoughts.”

Also the Beatitudes of Jesus teach us about...

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE TRULY HUNGRY HEART

* When you are hungry, you don’t need to be reminded that you need to eat. Its built in.

Mat 5:6 ESV "Blessed are those who ***hunger and thirst for righteousness***, for they shall be satisfied.

There is a principle that we live by, whether we realize it or not.

Delight and Value

That which we delight in most, has for us, the greatest value. It is an issue of attraction or appeal. Things. Another person. Our worldly possessions. Preferences. Tastes. Goals.

Psa 35:27 ESV Let those who **delight in my righteousness** shout for joy and be glad and say evermore, "Great is the LORD, who delights in the welfare of his servant!"

We are to delight in Righteousness, because that which we delight in, is what we rejoice over. And that which we rejoice over is that which satisfies us most. Not only does Gods Righteousness at work in our lives, benefit us personally, but it Glorifies God preeminently. So Delight in Righteousness. Shout for Joy. Declare your Satisfaction.

This principle will govern and affect our choices. It will also determine who we spend our time with and what occupies our thoughts the most. It will reveal that which brings us the most satisfaction.

Things of Lower value

* How can we delight in things which for us, have little or lower value? If God's righteous Kingdom of Heaven offers you little delight, we will ascribe little value to it. It is an issue of heart, value and desires.

Jesus gives us a great parable on this very issue.

Mat 13:44-46 ESV (44) "The **kingdom of heaven** is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (45) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, (46) who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

This man ascribed high value to the pearl, because it was that which his heart delighted in. Now suppose you were the man in this story. And you discovered the Treasure Chest in the field. And instead of being full of gold, it contained a huge load of "Righteousness".

Do you think you would be as pleased and as joyful as the man in the story? Perhaps we would put very little value on it, because we have very little desire for it.

Q: *So what is it your heart seeks first and desires most?*

The Beatitudes of Jesus teach us about...

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE JOYFULLY SATISFIED HEART

* Fasting for our Hunger for Kingdom of Heaven. Fasting does for the spirit, what it does for the body; it increases one's hunger for physical food and spiritual life.

Mat 5:6 ESV "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, **for they shall be satisfied.**

In the parable, both the treasure and the pearl were not found then sold for gain. The Treasure and the pearl were things of such great value and worth that the man must possess it. Both the pearl and the treasure were worth all that the man had or owned.

A Longing heart

* A Longing heart for God's Kingdom is a hungry heart for God's righteousness.

Q: What does your heart desire or hunger for the most? And is there a hunger or thirst for God's righteousness?

(i.) Prayer and Fasting bring hunger and deeper desire for that which our Spirit longs for. Prayer and fasting can stir up a hunger for God's kingdom and His righteousness. If a hunger is already there, it can nurture and intensify or deepen that spiritual hunger.

Mat 6:16-18 ESV "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. (17) But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, (18) that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And ***your Father who*** sees in secret ***will reward you.***

God expects us to pray and to fast and to seek Him for that great treasure of Kingdom Righteousness. However we may not be able to effectively fast, if our hearts are not already properly burdened.

Prayer & Fasting is no more than talking in our heads, and going without food; unless we are genuinely concerned enough that in humble desperation, we bring our requests and needs before God in prayer. We desire that enough to fast, as we meditate on the desire of our heart and allow our fasting to take our burden of desire and increase its weight exponentially.

As we seek His kingdom and His righteousness, He has promised that we will find it. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, ***for they will be satisfied*** (or filled)."

(ii.) Fasting must be that to which desperation drives us, not that which we utilize as a routine, or means of getting what we want. But as we seek what God wants, He promises that "Our Father ...will reward you".

Isa 58:2-5 ESV Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did **righteousness** and did not forsake the judgment of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they **delight** to draw near to God. (3) 'Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?' Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. (4) Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high. (5) Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a person to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a reed, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the LORD?

But for too many Christians today, there is no passion, no fire in their prayer, no fervency in their fasting and there is little delight or satisfaction in righteousness. There may be a going about without food, but there is no heavy **burden**, no all-consuming desire to make effectual that which we pray and fast for; there is little grief over personal sin, nor pursuit of changed hearts or for righteous ways of living.

The promise of the Blessing

* Hungering and thirsting for righteousness is about desiring what God desires for us.

Mat 5:6 ESV "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, **for they shall be satisfied.**

“Satisfied” here means to be filled. It refers to feeding or the “fattening” of livestock. Its not about longing for and receiving salvation or escaping hell. This is about desiring the King and His Kingdom above all else and for Him to have His way.

Q: *So what is it your heart seeks first and desires most?*

Jesus Christ:
Our Highest Calling,
Our Greatest Desire,
our Soul's Source and Joy
and our All-Consuming passion.

CONCLUSION:

(1) Righteousness is a trait of the KoH. Is Righteousness a trait of my life? Does my heart desire His righteousness? Do I seek to live Righteously? Obediently, repenting from sin and allowing God to lead me in His paths of Righteousness for His name sake.(Ps.23:3)

(2) Does your heart hunger and thirst for righteousness? Our bodies crave things that are not healthy? Our heart and spirit can hunger for things that are not spiritually healthy or righteous.

(3) Have you sought God for the great treasure of His Righteousness? “Oh God, fatten me up with your righteousness.”

A Prayer for ***Hunger & thirst.***

<p>Psa 40:17 ESV As for me, ¹<u>[I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me].</u> ²<u>[You are my help and my deliverer];</u> ³<u>[do not delay, O my God!]</u></p>

¹I am poor and needy; That is humbly acknowledging our desperate need. We are lacking. We are skin and bones when it comes to our Righteousness. Lord fatten us up.

We are lacking a hunger...we am lacking in spiritual fervor. That’s what we may need, a higher spiritual fever, setting us on fire from the inside, so that we burn for Christ; we long for His Kingdom. We hunger and thirst for His righteous and that nothing, nothing will satisfy our hunger - nothing will quench our thirst – not anything in life, lest it be His Kingdom and His righteousness.

<p>Mat. 6:33a But <u>seek first the kingdom of God</u> and his righteousness,</p>

²You are my Help and Deliverer; that is a confident dependence upon God is my only Help and my only Hope to meet our needs and satisfy our hunger for your kingdom righteousness.

I don’t tend to desire, that which is more Kingdom oriented. I’m distracted by earthly things – not necessarily sinful things; but just things

that aren't really what God wants me to be consumed with. Lord make me starved for your Kingdom; . Make me parched for your Righteousness.

Psa 42:1-2 ESV (1) As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. (2) My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

³Do not Delay, Oh my God. – A Desperate, Humble plea to God. Righteousness is not so much what we do, but what God gives to us.

“Do Not delay, Oh My God”. Do not delay in manifesting your grace and extending your help in my life. Do not delay to stir up a longing, a hunger, a thirst for your Kingdom and for your righteousness. Supply my need. Satisfy my deep desire for your Righteousness to fill my life. Lord, if you don't give it to me, I'll never possess righteousness. Oh My God. Do Not Delay!

In our need, a prayer for the Righteousness of God to pour over us.

Isa 45:8 ESV "Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down *righteousness*; let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit; let the earth cause them both to sprout; I the LORD have created it.

A Prayer for Revival. Not for the world. Not for America. Not for you're your church, but for us as individuals. Oh God, bring a revival of righteousness in my life and -- ***Do Not Delay!***



SERIES: "The Narrow Way" Feb.9, 2020
SERIES: "The Narrow Way" Feb.9, 2020
Sermon Title: "Presenting Christ to the World"
Text: Mat.5:7



Mat 5:7 ESV "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Theme: "Merciful"

INTRODUCTION

Imagine being in a court of law and you know you are guilty. You know you have no good excuse for your crime and you see no way out of this situation. You are worried that the judge is going to throw the book at you. What can you do? Perhaps plead for mercy and throw yourself upon the mercy of the court.

Has that ever really been done? I think people would rather make excuses than plead for mercy. I remember when President Reagan was shot and his shooter was eventually declared "not guilty" by reason of insanity. How could that be? We saw him shoot the President with our own eyes. We also saw him shoot the white house press secretary James Brady in the head, Police Officer Thomas Delahanty in the neck, Secret Service agent Tim McCarthy in the abdomen. 4 out of the six shots fired hit a human. So we know he was guilty. Yet he was declared "not guilty by reason of insanity"? That is insanity. Guilty by reason of insanity maybe, but not "not guilty". That was the excuse for his actions and that is Insane.

Today we learn about Mercy. Rather than making excuses for our actions or lifestyle, perhaps we should throw ourselves at the mercy of heaven's court. Anything but admit guilt or fault.

Mat 5:7 ESV "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

2Co 1:2-3 ESV Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,

Our Lord here turns more directly to the **character of his followers in relation to** one another,,,(Pulpit Comm.)

“The Beatitudes direct us to the great goal or end which will resolve for us, many difficulties in the great battle of life which we all have before us. These qualities of which our Saviour speaks, are within the reach of all of us; and they amply serve to sustain us in all the conflicts of poverty and distress with which many of us are encompassed.”

(A. P. Stanley, Christian World Pulpit, vol. xix., p. 385.V.)

Jesus tells us that **The Merciful are blessed**. Mercy is twofold. We call it pity when it has compassion on those who are suffering. We refer to it as mercy when it extends forgiveness to those who have done us wrong. The meek man endures an injury; the *merciful* man *forgives* it. (W. C. Smith, The Sermon on the Mount, p. 20.)

Like the whole of Scripture, the Beatitudes are effective for bringing glory to God, help to our fellow man and personal benefit and blessing for all who allow God’s Spirit of Holiness to infiltrate our inner most being, planting the seed of Mercy, then allowing it to be nurtured to grow into a Christ-like trait.

Today, The Beatitudes focus Jesus’ teaching about...

MERCY DEFINED, DESCRIBED AND DISPLAYED

Mercy Defined

* Read Psalm 136 all the way through.

* **Mercy is defined in regard to one person’s treatment toward another.**

Mercy: Compassion; Kindness, Loving-Kindness,

Mercy: Regarding justice, may refer to withholding that which a person may deserve, such as judgment, or punishment.

So What is mercy, or compassion? It is sorrow at the suffering of your fellow man. That sorrow on behalf of others, is often accompanied by, an strong desire, if possible, to relieve that suffering. It does not ask the

question, “Is the suffering person of my nationality, or skin color? Is he or she aligned with my political party or religious group? It may not even consider the question, “Does the person deserve relief?” It simply asks the question, “Does he suffer?” And perhaps then, “How can I help?”

As God’s mercy is to be concerned - not merely in regard to physical needs but of spiritual needs as well – especially for their spiritual needs. To lack mercy, may be to lack the HS motivation to be obedient to Christ’s commandments and commission, or to demonstrate God’s love to others who are in need. “Mercy is a reflection of the heart of God for the good of others.”

Mercy Described (Lam3:19-23)

* Mercy is described in terms of the depth and extent of God’s character. Gods character does not change, therefore His mercies do not change.

Lam 3:19-23 ESV (19) Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! (20) My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. (21) But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: (22) The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; (23) they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

What is the character of this mercifulness? It is a quality exercised between man and man, independent of written law, and which is not so much certain acts of forgiveness, as a temper of the soul. It is a temper which makes the one who has it, not so much sorry that he has been injured, but sorry that the injurer should have the heart to do the wrong. All memory of wrong fades from him. (BI)

So we see when a missionary is persecuted and tortured for Christ and the result is not hatred, but a deep merciful concern for the one who is doing the persecution. That isn’t something we can plan on or prepare for. That kind of mercy is only from the Heart of God, and as John Piper has said, “that is not something we can stock up on”, but is that which unexpectedly comes from God at the very moment we need it and

not as second before. That kind of mercy can only from the heart of God Himself.

Mercy Displayed / Examples

* We can see mercy displayed in the example of how God has treated us.

Mercy may be demonstrated by: (1) undeserved acts of kindness toward someone. Or (2) by forgiving another person for something they did or for what they owe you. Matthew 18:21-35 presents Christ's expectation of how we are to extend mercy to others. Peter asks our Lord how many times he should forgive another person.

Mat 18:22-35 ESV (22) Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. (23) "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. (24) When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. (25) And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. (26) So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' (27) And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. (28) But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' (29) So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' (30) He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. (31) When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. (32) Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. (33) And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' (34) And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. (35) So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

God is unchanging. His character is undiminished. Therefore His Mercies are unfailing, and His mercies that are available for us in our dealings with others is also available in undiminished measure.

Mercy towards others is displayed as an example of God's Kingdom mercy and how God, for Christ's sake, has treated us.

A PRAYER FOR GOD TO ACT

* Lets look at a prayer from the Psalmist as he prays to God to act according to His character. Sometimes when we confess or sins to God and ask for His fresh forgiveness; part of our motivation is simply fear and hoping to escape any consequences for our actions.

The Importance of honesty and personal, spiritual evaluation

* This prayer is an awareness of one's own horrendous sin. (v1

Psa 51:1-4 ESV (1) To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. (2) Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! (3) For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. (4) Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Our sins are not little white sins; or slight sins, but our sins are horrific sins, grievous violations against God's holiness and we are worthy of hell fire. So we pray, Oh God, Have Mercy on me. Do not give me what I deserve.

Some may say, "Oh we shouldn't be merciful – God shouldn't be merciful to certain sinful people, for if He is merciful toward them, they may take advantage of that and sin all the more, thinking they can live however they please.

Rom 2:5 ESV But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

We tend to think that the threat of God's wrath is all that can cause a person to truly repent and yet Paul writes that it is in fact the mercies of God that motivates people to repent. And if they don't, we needn't worry about that, because they won't get away with anything. They will

incur all the more of God's wrath, if they take advantage of His generous mercies.

So the Psalmist prays for God to deal with him according to God's steadfast love and abundant mercies. I tend to feel that however light we consider our sin to be, is how light is our sense of desperation in need of forgiveness.

Dependence on God's character

* In prayer for mercy, there is the dependence upon God's character and goodness. The Psalmist's prayer is trusting in God's Mercy in his own guilt.(v2) He is quite literally throwing himself upon the mercies of Almighty God.

(v2) [YOU] Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and [YOU] cleanse me from my sin! There is no hope here of the attitude, "I can take care of this myself." "I'll work it out with my own "religion". This is total dependence on God as the one who has been sinned against, and God as the only one who can forgive my sins, and show mercy.

This Reflects a proper focus and effect of our sin

* This prayer acknowledges the violation of the Holiness of Almighty God without concern of one's own consequences. (3)

Ps.51 (3) For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. (4) **Against you, you only**, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

The concern is with his relationship with God. His concern is that his sin has separated him from his heavenly Father. That is the most grievous aspect of his sin and the strong motivation that causes him to genuinely, and dramatically repent.

CONCLUSION:

A Prayer for *mercy*. Not a prayer for God to be merciful to us. But for God to bestow within us, a heart of mercy, like His own.

Psa 40:17 ESV As for me, ¹[I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me]. ²[You are my help and my deliverer]; ³[do not delay, O my God!]

¹I am poor and needy; That is humbly acknowledging our desperate need. I am lacking in mercy and compassion for others. I first ask for forgiveness for my sin of mercilessness; lack of compassion, lack of mercy. God forgive my sin.

²You are my Help and Deliverer; that is a confident dependence upon God as my only Help and my only Hope I am in need of your mercy in my heart toward others. I Need you to nurture your heart of mercy into my own life, my attitude and my treatment toward others. Often times, those lacking in mercy and compassion toward others, feel they are right in not being merciful, especially toward those who may not deserve mercy. And yet, that is exactly what mercy is; not giving undeserving people what they deserve. They may deserve payback. They may deserve a taste of their own medicine. But when we are merciful, we are Christ-like and will receive mercy.

³Do not Delay, Oh my God. – A Desperate Humble plea to God to take action. Hear my prayer today. Give me a merciful spirit NOW, for I know it is your will. So do not delay. – “Do Not delay, Oh My God”. Do not delay in manifesting your grace and extending your help in my life. Holy Father we thank you for your blessed promise: “Blessed are the Merciful, for **WE** shall receive mercy.”



SERIES: SERMON ON THE MOUNT “The Narrow Way” Feb.16, 2020

Sermon Title: “Presenting Christ to the World” pt.2

Text: Mat.5:7



Mat 5:7 ESV "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Theme: “Merciful”

INTRODUCTION

As we are going through the Sermon on the Mount, we need to keep in mind, that Jesus’ wants us to present Christ and His Kingdom to the world, to desire the Kingdom of Heaven as part of their own live and their own future.

But the Sermon on the Mount is also a message of reassurance, especially the Beatitudes – a message of reassurance, that whatever our experience is in this life – that god’s people, the children of His kingdom, are promised His blessing in eternity and that, all we endured will be rewarded and all we sacrificed or suffered will be without regret in our eternal home.

Realistically, there are those who, in this life, can’t grasp the depth and extent of God’s blessing which will characterize His reign in our lives now and fill His kingdom to come. As a result, they place little value on His present reign or our future home.

And for those believers who, in this life, desired but never gained, or complained and never rejoiced; I am certain, they will one day in their eternal home, come to realize how wonderfully and beautifully they were blessed and how joyful they might have been and the contentment they might have experienced, had they only taken to heart these blessed attitudes, we call Beatitudes, that Jesus exalts in the gospels.

If we are discontent with the things of this world, don’t allow it to move us to strive for more of the world’s things, but allow it to nurture a deeper desire and greater anticipation for the life to come.

REVIEW:

“The Beatitudes direct us to the great goal or end which will resolve for us, many difficulties in the great battle of life which we all have before

us. Like the whole of Scripture, the Beatitudes are effective for bringing glory to God, help to our fellow man and personal benefit and blessing for all who allow God's Spirit of Holiness to infiltrate our inner most being, planting the seed of Mercy, then allowing it to be nurtured to grow into a Christ-like trait. (Bible Illustrator)

MERCY TRUSTS IN THE PROMISE

* Being Merciful trusts in The Promised principle of Sowing and Reaping

Mat 5:7 ESV "Blessed are the merciful, for ***they shall receive mercy.***

So how are the merciful blessed? They will receive Mercy, and they will be treated mercifully by God and perhaps by others.

He promises the Blessed reward. Christ did not mean a man to be merciful for the sake of obtaining mercy, but as a necessary result he would obtain it. Mercy is the reward of mercy. (S. A. Brooke.) It is a kingdom principle of sowing and reaping., that is promised and governed by God.

Our Mercy reflects a greater Master

* We know that mercy is an act or a disposition that reflects a greater Master, Jesus.

Luk 6:32-38 ESV (32) "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. (33) And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. (34) And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount.

If you love those who love you, so what? Even the pagans do that. If you do good to those who do good to you, so what? Even the unbelievers do that. If you lend to people expecting to get paid back, so what? Even the sinners do that. It's about how we live in a manner that communicates to others, we believe in something different, something better, something of eternal worth.

Luk 6:35-38 ESV (35) But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. (36) Be **merciful**, even as your Father is merciful. (37) "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; (38) **give, and it will be given to you.** Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For **with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.**"

But we are to love those who hate us. We are to do good to those who persecute us. We are to show the world God's unconditional mercy and God promises (1) our reward will be great and (2) we will show ourselves to be Sons of God. Not that doing these things will make us sons of God, but that in doing these things, we will demonstrate another system of values and demonstrate ourselves to be citizens of another kingdom and we will identify ourselves to be Sons of God.

This invites us to live in a manner that leaves others with a taste of the KoH, while on this earth, and we will receive an abundant reward in the fullness of the KoH to come.

When we are merciful to those who we feel deserve judgment, we demonstrate God's long-suffering, loving character and we sow God's treatment, we display His character - the Lordship of Christ and we leave others with a foretaste of the KoH.(v33-34) What life would be like if God ruled our hearts? What eternity will be like, in God's eternal Kingdom of Heaven?

Peace. Humility. Mercy. A Kingdom and people who reflect and sow the character of our King. Some can't find it within them to live that way, because they value the things of this life more than the blessed rewards in the life to come.

2 SIDE NOTES regarding Practicing and Sowing Mercy:

(1) First: Mercy takes into consideration the effect on people, not necessarily the things we may sacrifice.

* When we are merciful to others, then we are others focused and Heavenly minded and we lose nothing.(v35-36). If we feel like we are sacrificing something or missing out on something as we are attempting to be obedient to God, be assured, the Sermon on the Mount promises, we lose NOTHING. Regardless of what we sacrifice, regardless of who we don't teach a lesson, regardless of what we think we are missing – as God's children, seeking to be led by His Spirit – we lose nothing. We lose no argument. We lose no money. We lose no opportunity, because what we do in the name of Christ as his children. We lose nothing, but get so much more through Gods' good pleasure in blessing his children. We lose no good thing, but gain so much more.

Instead of making clear to everyone "I told you so"; God's Spirit may lead us to simply be merciful, kind, compassionate, understanding, non-judgmental. And He promises that if we act mercifully, then we will receive mercy and are viewed and treated mercifully from God.

Mercy is not declaring someone innocent, when they are guilty. IT is refraining from believing the worst until the guilt is proven. Mercy quenches a condemning spirit toward others.

(2) Secondly: Mercy focuses on sowing God's character into the lives of others.

* When we sow mercy toward others, God can bless us to experience similar treatment. The principle of sowing necessitates giving away mercy in order for us to receive or reap mercy.

Imagine you had a sack of seeds. But you didn't sow any of them because you didn't want to get rid of them or weren't sure if they'd grow or not. You have to sow seed or else they won't grow anything. And if we don't sow God's mercy we will not reap the blessed benefits that our Lord Jesus promises. But if we do sow mercy, we will realize that we

end up with more than we gave out. And if someone is guilty, mercy quenches resentment by expressing forgiveness.

(3) Thirdly: Mercy must become an important part of our Great Commission ministry.

1Pe 3:14-16 ESV But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, (15) but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with **gentleness** and **respect**, (16) having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

Gentleness and respect equals Mercy in action.

Q: How are souls saved? Through God's mercy. Why did God Keep His covenant with Israel? Because of His mercies. How is it God does not treat any of us as we deserve? Because He is full of mercy and He demonstrates His loving kindness by not giving us what our sins deserve, that is eternal judgment.

Tit 3:4-7 ESV But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, (5) he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, (6) whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, (7) so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

As we seek to share our faith and the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ, our presentation must be one of meekness and gentleness; not with harsh or disrespectful speech. But it might be also with Mercy which causes our hearts to break, as we are filled with compassion for the lost souls who are without hope and with Christ and still separated from God and outside of His family.

As Christians, practicing mercy carries with it the promised blessing of sowing and Reaping as God will be merciful to us.

ACCOUNTS OF MERCY IN THE BIBLE

* In the New Testament, it was due to the Mercies of Christ, that 3 different groups approached Jesus for physical healing and all cried out, “Son of David, Lord Have Mercy”

(1) Mat.9:27 - 2 blind men approach Jesus begging for mercy. (2) In Mat.15:22 – a woman whose daughter was grievously demonized seek Christ’s mercy for her deliverance. (3) In Mat.20:30 – 2 more blind men call upon Jesus to be merciful.

* In Scripture, Mercy is as much a part of the character and nature of God, as righteousness, Justice and faithfulness.

Exo 34:6-7 ESV The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God *merciful* and gracious, slow to anger, And abounding in *steadfast love* and faithfulness, (7) keeping *steadfast love* for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

Jas 5:11 ESV Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and *merciful*.

Mercy is not merely how God acts, but Mercy is an aspect of His mercy. God doesn’t change, therefore his Mercies do not change, because Mercy is as much a part of the character and nature of God, as righteousness, Justice and faithfulness.

* It was Jeremiah the prophet who made a direct correlation between the faithfulness and mercies of God.

Lam 3:22-23 ESV The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his *mercies* never come to an end; (23) they are new every morning; great is your *faithfulness*.

Unending mercies demonstrate the unchanging faithfulness of God and the unchangeable nature of His being. There is a direct correlation between the faithfulness and mercies of God.

*** Mercy is A gift of the Holy Spirit.**

- (1) Mercy is evidence of the HS at work in a believer's life.
- (2) It is evidence of spiritual growth and maturity in the Christian journey.
- (3) It is how God desires to work in and through a believer in their life and kingdom ministry.

Rom 12:6-9 ESV Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; (7) if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; (8) the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. (9) Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. [1Thes.5:21b]

Mercy is a gift of the Holy Spirit and a sign that God is developing His character in us.

***It was Jesus who rebuked openly the religious leaders for not manifesting mercy.**

Mat 23:23 ESV "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

We may find it easier or more palatable to give, tithe, and follow outward rules, rather than allowing God to genuinely convert our hearts and transform our lives, into that which reflects the King and Kingdom of Heaven; by nurturing a spirit of mercy.

I personally believe it is quite possible to have a spiritual conversion, from being outside God's family, to being born again into God's family through faith in Christ; while NOT experiencing a converted heart. And where there is no real heart conversion, then there can be no lifestyle or behavior conversion. The Bible seems pretty clear about the reality of carnal Christians, living with what seems to be unconverted hearts.

Jesus openly rebuked the religious leaders for not practicing mercy.

*** Mercy is that mystical, Supernatural force of God which is intended to bring about repentance.**

Rom 2:4 ESV Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

Kindness demonstrated instead of judgment, is Mercy. We tend to think that the threat of God's wrath is all that can cause a person to truly repent and yet Paul writes that it is in fact the mercies of God that motivates people to repent. And if they don't, we needn't worry about that, because they won't get away with anything. They will incur all the more of God's wrath, if they take advantage of His generous mercies. That is something God can sort out and sift through.

Perhaps both fear of wrath, AND gratitude for mercy, work together. They are not mutually exclusive, as these passages present.

- **Psa 5:7** But as for me, I will come *into* thy house in the multitude of thy **mercy**: and in thy **fear** will I worship toward thy holy temple.
- **Psa 33:18** Behold, the eye of the LORD *is* upon them that **fear** him, upon them that hope in his **mercy**;
- **Psa 103:11** For as the heaven is high above the earth, *so* great is his **mercy** toward them that **fear** him.
- **Psa 103:17** But the **mercy** of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that **fear** him, and his righteousness unto children's children;
- **Psa 118:4** Let them now that **fear** the LORD say, that his **mercy** endureth for ever.
- **Psa 147:11** The LORD taketh pleasure in them that **fear** him, in those that hope in his **mercy**.
- **Pro 16:6** By **mercy** and truth iniquity is purged: and by the **fear** of the LORD *men* depart from evil.
- **Luk 1:50** And his **mercy** *is* on them that **fear** him from generation to generation.

Both fear of wrath, AND gratitude for mercy are important components in our spiritual sensitivity in coming to Christ.

A FEW TIPS FOR PRACTICING MERCY.

(1) Don't look upon a person's merit but upon their desperate circumstances. We should never look down on another person's merit, until we have honestly examined our own.

How did they get here? What are their needs? How would God have me view this person, in this situation?

(2) Don't think first about where can I refer someone, but rather, how can I offer some help and hope? We may attempt to escape personal responsibility by sending someone away and referring them to a secular agency, when God may have a purpose in sending them to you. The truth is, a person in need, may not need an agency, as much as they need a caring, merciful Child of God, who can listen, encourage and share their troubles, through mercy and prayer.

(3) Don't treat others as you have been treated, but ask yourself, "How can I demonstrate God's love and His kingdom blessings in this person's life?" It is easy to evaluate, criticize, and point out another person's shortcomings. When we are in contact with people in need, and we find ourselves thinking, "How can I send this person on their way"; That might be a good time to call to mind the many people who have helped us, when we were in need, and possibly underserving of their mercy, and yet they were merciful to us.

(4) What could I say or do, to communicate to another person, "I hold nothing against you. Forgiveness." If there is one thing we do well, even as Christians, is we can hold a grudge. Or we can be judgmental and even find a way to excuse judgmentalism. We have the ability to keep account of the grievances or irritations of others to us.

Instead we may need to learn how to demonstrate God's mercy and express value and encouragement to another person, who we feel is

undeserving of our mercy. And again, that is exactly what mercy is; Expressing God's loving kindness toward those whom we feel are undeserving. That is the definition of Mercy.

What might we say, to communicate forgiveness or to express mercy to another person?

(5) Look for Great Commission opportunities to connect lost people with God's mercy. Think about this; If we only shared Christ with those who are worthy, we would never share with anyone. Because we are all unworthy and undeserving to hear the message forgiveness and hope and Mercy, all must hear.

CONCLUSION: Some Considerations to bear in mind
(Dr. Chalmers Smith.)

- I.** Am I lacking in this blessing of mercy? Let us evaluate ourselves honestly before God. God's mercy is changeless, ours is ever changing. God's mercy is provident and thoughtful, ours is completely conditional and unreliable at best.
- II.** How may we hope to have the mercy of God to be displayed through us to others? The human heart doesn't typically harbor mercy naturally. God's mercy can only be living and manifested in a heart that has been converted and transformed into the likeness of Christ Himself.
- III.** Are we merciful in judgment of others? In our speech? Do we not take pleasure in sharp criticism? Are we merciful in consideration for others? Are we merciful employers? Am I a merciful neighbor? Are we merciful parents? Or merciful Children for that matter? Am I a merciful friend to others?

A PRAYER FOR MERCY; Not a prayer for God to be merciful to us. But for God to bestow within us, a heart of mercy, like His own, toward others.

Psa 40:17 ESV As for me, ¹[I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me]. ²[You are my help and my deliverer]; ³[do not delay, O my God!]

¹I am poor and needy; That is humbly acknowledging our desperate need. I am lacking in mercy and compassion for others. I first ask for forgiveness for my sin of mercilessness; lack of compassion, lack of mercy. God forgive my sin.

²You are my Help and Deliverer; that is a confident dependence upon God is my only Help and my only Hope I am in need of your mercy in my heart toward others. I Need you to nurture your heart of mercy into my own life, my attitude and my treatment toward others. Often times, those lacking in mercy and compassion toward others, feel they are right in not being merciful, especially toward those who may not deserve mercy. And yet, that is exactly what mercy is; not giving undeserving people what they deserve. They may deserve payback. They may deserve a taste of their own medicine. But when we are merciful, we are Christ-like and will receive mercy.

³Do not Delay, Oh my God. – A Desperate Humble plea to God to take action. Hear my prayer today. Give me a merciful spirit NOW, for I know it is your will. So “Do Not delay, Oh My God”. Do not delay in changing and converting my heart to a heart of mercy like your own.

* Holy Father we thank you for your blessed promise: “Blessed are the Merciful, for **WE** shall receive mercy.”



SERIES: SERMON ON THE MOUNT “The Narrow Way”

Sermon Title: “Pure Heart & Focused Mind” Feb.23, 2020

Text: Mat.5:8

Mat 5:8 ESV "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Mat 5:8 ESV "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Diagram illustrating the structure of the verse:

- Fact:** Blessed
- Who? Why? How?:** are the pure in heart
- because...:** for they shall see God
- Promise:** (implied result)

INTRODUCTION

Luk 10:8-9 ESV Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. (9) Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

As we have been continuously reminded; as Jesus preached about the good news of the Kingdom of Heaven, he would often heal the lame, cast our unclean spirits or even raise the dead, to leave the people with a foretaste of what that Kingdom would be like. Likewise, the Blessed Attitudes. Or Beatitudes are God working through us, so as we minister to others in the name of Christ and evidence these kingdom qualities, we too leave them with a hint of what the Kingdom of Heaven will be like; kindness; peace; humility.



Remember this? Ivory Soap. 99 ⁴⁴/₁₀₀ % pure. Ronnie Milsap had a song about 99 ⁴⁴/₁₀₀ % pure, but it wasn't about soap.

99 ⁴⁴/₁₀₀ % pure: Wouldn't it be great if that reflected our own percentage of personal purity of heart? As far as the

Kingdom of Heaven is concerned, we all fall short of purity and Jesus Christ alone is responsible for us gaining access and entrance into heaven.

“Blessed are the Pure in Heart, for they shall see God.” It is interesting that (1) Jesus does not imply perfection as a level of personal purity of heart that we must achieve. If we have ever gone to the amusement park

and stood in line to ride the roller coaster or ferris wheel, and before you are allowed on board, you stand next to a sign that is graduated in inches, and at the top there is a red line, reading: “You must be this tall to ride”.



Thankfully, Jesus does not say to us: “You must be at this level of purity to get into my kingdom.” (2) But neither does Jesus measure us with one another. “Your personal purity has to exceed that of the other person.” What God requires for us to enter into His kingdom, is fully provided for us, and imparted to us when we trust fully in Jesus as Savior. So this issue of a Pure Heart is more related to how we live daily as Christians or as citizens of God’s Heavenly Kingdom.

Today, The Beatitudes focus Jesus’ teaching about...

THE BLESSINGS OF THE PURE IN HEART

* We read this and may think, “Pure in heart? That doesn’t describe me, so why even try?” or “I could never measure up to that.”

So Who are the Pure in Heart?

Mat 5:8 ESV "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

See if this might refer to any of us today. A “**Pure Heart**”: We know the **Heart** refers to **1a)** that organ in the human body which is the center of the circulation of the blood, and may often be regarded to as the center our source of physical life. Or **2b)** The heart is also often referred to as the center of spiritual life; not so much as the place of emotions, but as the soul or mind; as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, or endeavors.

So we can see the “heart” is referring to the central most, inner most part of a person; their desires; their motivation; their interests, or even our will. The **Pure** heart is the word “Katharos” – which is where we get the name Katherine. It means pure or purity. In a **Jewish** sense, this would

be a person who is not presently unclean but in a right standing before God. From a Biblical cultural perspective, The word Pure is often used to refer to a vine having been pruned in order to be fit to bear more fruit.

Ethically, for us today, may best refer to being free of corruption, whether by desire or activity; free from that which would be false or deceitful. So those who are pure in heart, are not so because they are perfect and sinless; but rather those who are in right standing before God, because they are pruned or cleansed from known sin, and are presently in right standing and right relations with God, through faith in Jesus. That is where it starts. And when a Christian falls into sin, they do not need to get saved all over again, but as John writes to the church in 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleans us from all unrighteousness."

You see God doesn't expect us to be perfect. However, I think its fair to say He does expect us to strive towards purity, holiness, and sinless living; Yet God has provided for all our impurities, all our uncleanness to be taken care of. Through faith in Christ, our sins are washed away.

Rev 7:13-15 ESV Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" (14) I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. **They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.** (15) "Therefore they are *before the throne of God*, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

The pure in heart are those who are believers in Jesus Christ, have been cleansed of their sins and are presently living to honor God.

The blessings of God

* So what are the blessings of God for the pure in heart?

Psa.24:3-5 ESV (3) Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? (4) He who has clean hands and a **pure heart**, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not

swear deceitfully. (5) *He will receive blessing from the LORD* and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

In this passage, the blessings of God are two-fold.

(i.) Blessing of God's Favor (Ps.24:4-5

* God promises the pure in heart will receive “blessings from the Lord.” It sort of sounds kind of generic and non-motivational. “He will receive blessing from the Lord...” . This could refer to any number of manifestations of God extending His grace or expressing His unmerited favor towards any of us undeserving recipients in need, in a manner that is unique to the need of our individual situation or to the divine purposes of God. This is not a “one size fits all” or “cookie cutter” blessing from God, but leaves room of God moving specifically and uniquely in order to meet our own personal, unique need.

Heb 4:16 ESV Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Unique need. Unique circumstance. Unique timing. Unique blessing from God. God always reserves the time and the means of demonstrating His grace to us as recipients. And His grace and blessings are always custom made for our own particular situation.

But we also receive specifically...

(ii.) The Blessing of God's Gift of Righteousness

Psa.24:5 ESV (5) *He will receive* blessing from the LORD and *righteousness from the God* of his salvation.

* Here is what is often considered as a New Testament theological principle, revealed in the Old Testament. Righteousness is that which is crucial for entering into God's Kingdom, and is also that which we are completely void of, on our own. In fact, it is possible that the “righteousness from God” in Ps.24:5, is the content or description of the “blessing from the Lord” mentioned in the same verse.

“There is none righteous no not one.” (Rom. 3:10) However God promises that there is righteousness that is available for any of us.

Rom 5:1 ESV Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom 4:5 ESV And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is **counted** as righteousness,

To be justified, is to be declared righteous. Righteousness is one thing we don't have, but desperately need to enter God's eternal kingdom of Heaven. Sin keeps us out of God's heaven and righteousness is what we need to gain access into Gods' heaven. When we trust in Christ as our Savior, (1) our sins are forgiven, which is what separates us from God (Is.59:2) and keeps us out of heaven. (2) But we also receive from God, the gift of His righteousness, which is what we are void of, yet is crucial in order to enter Heaven's kingdom.

We can Praise the Lord for his mercies demonstrated to us, so that “he saved us, not because of the righteous things we have done, but because of His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior (Tit.3:5-6)

In this portion of the Beatitudes, Jesus teachess us about the Blessings promised to those who are pure in heart.

Q: So where are you in regard to having a “pure heart”?

SOME CLOSE ASSOCIATES OF A “PURE HEART”

* “Pure in Heart” & other closely associated qualities

Pure in Heart, as Pertaining to word and deed

Psa.24:3-5 ESV (3) Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? (4) He who has **clean hands** and a ***pure heart***, who does not lift up his soul to **what is false** and does not **swear deceitfully**. (5) He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

Close Associates of a pure heart: clean hands is a close associate of those who have a pure heart. It refers to innocence; not deceitful or given to being deceived; no guilt of bloodshed or violence.

Pro.22:11 ESV (11) He who loves ***purity of heart***, and whose ***speech is gracious***, will have the king as his friend.

Close Associates of a pure heart: Gracious words or words of blessing; words of encouragement, rather than comments of criticism. These are words of kindness and favor.

1Tim.1:5-7 ESV (5) The aim of our charge is ***love*** that issues from a ***pure heart*** and a ***good conscience*** and a ***sincere faith***. (6) Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, (7) desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

Close Associates of a pure heart: This love is agape love or God's unconditional love, even toward those of a sinful world (Jn.3:16). Another associate of a pure heart is a good or clear conscience and a sincere faith. It seems this sincere faith will be evidenced by the previous traits in that verse. And notice what it says; that those who stray away from these traits, have wandered away from the true faith, or from a pure heart.

2Tim.2:21-22 ESV (21) Therefore, if anyone ***cleanses himself*** from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for ***honorable*** use, set apart as ***holy, useful to the master*** of the house, ***ready for every good*** work. (22) So flee youthful passions and pursue ***righteousness, faith, love,*** and ***peace***, along with those who ***call on the Lord*** from a ***pure heart***.

Close Associates those who are of a pure heart: Those who are free of lust or the pursuing of insatiable desires; but in contrast to that, one who is pursuing righteousness; faith; love (agape); peace, prayer;

Pure in heart as in desire and motivation

* This is purity of heart as it pertains to our desires and motivations.

1Pet.1:22-23 ESV (22) Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a **pure heart**, (23) since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

Close Associates of a pure heart: Those who are actively and continually purifying their souls; those who are obedient to Truth; sincere in brotherly love (*Philadelphia*); Fervent in God's unconditional love (*agape*), being those who are truly born again.

Jas 4:7-10 ESV (7) Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (8) Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands^[Ps.24], you sinners, and **purify your hearts**^[Ps.24] you **double-minded**. (9) Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. (10) Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

A Pure heart is contrasted with a Double mind; meaning someone who has 2 spirits. They have divided interests, split affections, as they are both Loving God but also loving the world. A double-mind is a blurred vision.

“**Purify your hearts**” = lit. **Sanctify** your hearts. And he's talking to the church. Refocus your vision, fully on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Close Associates of a pure heart: Those who are humbly submitting to God; Who are actively resisting the devil; Who are mindfully drawing near to God and who are purposefully cleansing their hands or confessing their sinful ways. These are those who are genuinely and purposefully purifying their hearts, repenting with mourning and weeping. These are soberly humbling themselves before the Lord;

Here is a colossal misconception of the Christian life. “Joy and Happiness should always characterize the Christian life.” Bubbling Joy and Trouble erasing, surreal peace fills and soothes us in every situation. **Wrong!** Upon conviction of our sin by God's Holy Spirit, it is right and

necessarily crucial, that sadness, grief, and possibly depression fill our hearts, till we are brought to genuine repentance.

The promise of the Beatitudes is that...

THE PROMISE IS FOREVER

* The Pure in Heart are forever in the Presence of the Almighty

Mat 5:8 ESV "Blessed are the pure in heart, ***for they shall see God.***

“They Shall See God” – not being able to physically, visually see God, what he looks like, etc. But is a reference to being in His presence. That means we make it into our eternal dwelling, into His kingdom of heaven.

Who will stand before the Lord?

* Those with a pure heart refers to those who will stand before the Lord without condemnation and will not be dealt with as our sins deserve.

Psa.24:3 ESV (3) Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?

That is, Who will stand in the presence of the Almighty? Will it be you? Will it be me? How do we know?

Psa.24: -5 ESV (4) ***He who has clean hands and a pure heart,*** who does not lift up his soul to ***what is false*** and does not ***swear deceitfully***. (5) He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

Any of us planning on making it to heaven, will not be on account of anyone's own ability, works, spiritual maturity, charm, performance or good looks. It will be through our own personal faith in Jesus Christ, His death-blood sacrifice payment and His gift of righteousness imparted or credited to us.

The Pure in heart and the promise of blessing

* The Pure in heart have the promise of the blessing of being forever in the Presence of the Almighty, serving Him in His eternal kingdom plans.

Rev 7:13-15 ESV Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" (14) I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (15) "Therefore they are **before the throne of God**, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will **shelter them with his presence**.

Blessed are those with a Pure in Heart, clear focus and undivided interests.

CONCLUSION:

Let us see that we have a pure heart before God. Regularly, Daily allowing God to purify our hearts; come in, evaluate my weakness and my need and for Him to make the necessary adjustments.

A Prayer for a **Pure Heart**.

Psa 40:17 ESV As for me, ¹[I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me]. ²[You are my help and my deliverer]; ³[do not delay, O my God!]

¹**I am poor and needy**; That is humbly acknowledging our desperate need. I am lacking in purity of heart or a singleness of focus for a Christ-focused spiritual life.

²**You are my Help and Deliverer**; that is a confident dependence upon God as my only Help and my only Hope You are the only One who can purify my heart, captivate my attention and lead me in your path of righteousness, or path of right living before you.

³**Do not Delay, Oh my God**. – I offer my desperate, humble plea to God. Hear my prayer today. "Do Not delay, Oh My God". Do not delay in doing your work in my own heart, my focus, my attention, my affections, my pursuits, in keeping you as Ruler of every area of my life.



Don't close this booklet yet

without considering this all important question.

Is Jesus Christ the Savior of *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; --

Rom 3:23

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness
can only come from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten
Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but
have everlasting life. --John 3:16

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins
and sent Him to die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

-- Romans 6:23

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of Jesus
Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still
sinners, Christ died for us. ---Romans 5:8

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved." -- Rom 10:13

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he
gave the right to become children of God,
- John 1:12

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you are
truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

*Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your sins and
citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.*

The ABCs

A - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

B - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

C - Confess your sins to God. He already knows. Also Confess Jesus as your LORD. He desires and deserves to be your Lord.

Prayer: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

Connect with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

Commit yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:
Christ E. Free Church, PO Box 619, 19682 Hill Rd,
Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, www.christefca.org

*It is our prayer that you find **Jesus Christ** to be...*
your highest calling,
your greatest purpose,
your soul's source and joy,
and your all-consuming passion.

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May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.

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