

The Sermon on the Mount
Class Notes
Session 3

The “Beatitudes”

Matthew 5.7-12 (v.7): *“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”*

Like for like. Mercy is the Outer manifestation of Inner emotion. Active compassion for those who are least, last, and lost! Mercy embraces both forgiveness and compassion.

(v.8): *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”*

The Heart...the real, true self. Integration/integrity of the self.

The meaning has to do with the rest of the sermon. Not outward show—but a private encounter between God and the individual.

This is an undivided heart. Soren Kierkegaard— “Purity of heart is to will one thing”.

What is the blessing? To SEE God! ...ὁπτανομαι (*optanomai*)... “Be visible to”

To “see” God...To experience something. (“I hope to see that day”).

“Jesus introduces His Sermon on the Mount with nine beatitudes that detail the future blessedness of His disciples. These promised blessings are God’s gracious gifts to those who repent of their sins and trust Christ for righteousness. Only after Jesus has assured His disciples of God’s goodness to them does He call on them, in the rest of His sermon, to be good and do good. When we recognize our own spiritual poverty, when the Lord leads us to hunger and thirst for God’s righteousness, when He makes us pure in heart so that we seek to worship only the true God, then we are blessed, now and forever.”¹

Matthew 5.13-16 Salt and Light. These verses discuss the Purpose of discipleship.

Salt functions as a...Seasoning...Preservative...Purifier

The disciples of Jesus are to the earth what salt is to everyday life.

The earth (*kosmos*) is the realm of human existence that stands under God’s rule through the coming of Jesus. It is the universal scope of the church’s mission.

What happens when the church (a Christian) ceases to be what we are called to be? We are Foolish!

“...Lost its taste”... μωραίνομαι (*mōrainomai*)...“Foolish” “Absurd” (i.e. “Tasteless”)

(V 14) “Light”—a metaphor for God and God’s people... As well as truth...(Psalm 18.28; Micah 7.8)

We are God’s instruments created for a purpose.

To both Enhance the joy and meaning in our world and to Reveal the way to God!

¹ *The Lutheran Study Bible* (Concordia Publishing House, 2000).

(v.16): Our desire for “Salting” and “Shining”...Our “good works” are the Glorify the Father!

Luther: “What [Jesus] calls ‘good works’ here is the exercise, expression, and confession of the teaching about Christ and faith. . . Shining is the real job of believing or teaching, by which we also help others to believe” (*Luther’s Works: American Edition*: 21:65).

Matthew 5.17-20 The Fulfillment of the Law (Torah).

The focus now turns to the life one is to live before others and God...which “illuminates” those who sit in darkness.

Jesus’ new teaching brings realization and fulfillment to that which the Torah pointed and prophesied.

Fulfillment confirms the Torah’s truth. (However, there is a tension between Jesus and Moses).

Going Forward: “*Matthew’s discourses develop a full-orbed description of our discipleship to Jesus.* From the biblical point of view, all Christians are disciples, so the teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is not for a few more-committed believers. Matthew is a manual on discipleship, and throughout most of church history this Gospel has been used to provide the content of instruction for full-orbed Christian living.”²

² C.A. Beetham and N.L. Erickson, Eds. *The NIV Application Commentary on the Bible* (Zondervan Academic, 2004).