

Kingdom Manifesto

Studies in the Sermon on the Mount

3 – The Content of the Beatitudes

Matthew 5.1-12

Prescription vs. Description

- Prescription: something to recognize or replicate
- Description: declaration of the availability of the Kingdom to all sorts people

The blessing is available to the kinds of people named in the first half but is articulated in the second half

Spiritually Incompetent (v.3)

- Clueless and cowards about their spiritual state
 - Appreciation for, acknowledgement of, allegiance to – only the last posture changes people
 - There are those who are so spiritually incompetent that they think it – in itself – is a virtue
- Promise: the Kingdom is available
 - Does it sound like too good a deal and God might get the short end?

Grief-Bearers (v.4)

- Hard-earned heaviness – even smiling on the outside, they leave the aftertaste of loneliness
- Promise: encouragement and companionship that says all is not lost

Wall-Flowers (v.5)

- The overlooked and the lowly
 - Meekness isn't always good – Matthew 11
 - “If something goes wrong, I assume it's my fault”
 - “If someone needs something, I assume it will be needed from me”
- Promise: they are created for and heirs of the rule of the earth (Gen 1)

Unfulfilled (v.6)

- Longing for the rightness to life
 - In their own lives (even when – esp when – the wrongness is in their own hearts)
 - In their relationships – longing for love, genuine care, thoughtfulness, and expressions of all those
 - In their world – the world simply doesn't work – does God care at all about the disasters, corruption, in justice, oppression, or hatred?
 - Pastoral observation: most often the hunger arises when they feel it personally – so it's deep and personal, not just willingness to join a movement or make a post

- Promise: the taste test will be a full meal

Pity-Full (v.7)

- Pity for others, even when taken advantage of
 - Constantly pouring out and do so with heart on sleeve
 - Can end in complaint – always serving but internally griping (and at times externally, especially expressed in holding others to their standards)
- Promise: you will experience what you pour out
 - Jesus is perfectly capable, in His Kingdom, of keeping you full so that whatever needs are around you, you can step into

The All-in (v.8)

- Trying to do the right thing for the right reason
 - Danger is perfectionism or frustration with others / situation (Ps 73)
- Promise: it'll all be worth it

Peacemakers (v.9)

- Taking fire from both sides
 - Everywhere you turn, there's an enemy now at your back – bone-wearying but refuse to step out of the way
- Promise: you have a safe place to belong

Beaten up (v.10-12)

- Shunned and oppressed because of faith
- It does not always go up and to the right!
- Promise: you get the Kingdom and you're in good company

It is not the first half of the Blesseds that are attractive or preservative – ***it is the second half that are actually the salt and light***

Questions for Discussion:

1. If you were to write a list of those you think “unblessable” who would miss the Kingdom (and were honest about it!), whom would you put on it? Why?
2. Which Beatitude surprises you the most? Why? Which one is the most comforting? Why?
3. Reread 4.23-25. Now imagine yourself in that crowd – one who was healed by the miraculous power of Jesus or brought a person to be healed by Him. In what ways do the Beatitudes speak Good News to you if you're in that crowd?
4. Reread the second half of the verses in the Beatitudes. How do they make us into the salt and light Jesus describes in v.13-16?
5. COVID Check-in: how are you? Your family? Your neighbors? Your One?