

SITTING IN THE PRESENCE OF JESUS, CHANGES US!

MATT CH5:7-8

ILLUSTRATION

In the musical and film “Les Miserables” there are four main characters, namely – Jean Valjean, Inspector Javert, Fantine, and Cosette. The story centres around Jean Valjean and the mercy he receives from a Priest after stealing silver ornaments from him. Valjean is arrested for stealing the silver and returned to the Priest who should validate the theft. However, the Priest hands Valjean more silver in the shape of candlestick holders, stating that he had given Valjean the silver and that Valjean had forgotten to take the silver candlestick holders!

Utterly amazed at this mercy, not receiving what he should, Valjean makes a promise to put this mercy to good use!

RE-CAP

The context of the “Sermon on the Mount” is one where JESUS has demonstrated power over Satan Ch4:1-11, power over calling His disciples Ch4:18-22, and power over the demonic Ch4:24 along with power over illness and sickness Ch4:24! JESUS is about to give a powerful message over the **reality** and **availability** of “Kingdom Life” for His followers!

The word “Blessed” in the Greek “**Markarios**”, meaning “joy or happy”, suggesting that there is something about being favoured by God, that results in joy and happiness! When God places His favour on a person, the “joy and/or happiness” that is on offer, is available now, and fully permanent in the future, for the disciples of JESUS! So one way to consider this word “Blessed” is, not so much as, on hopes of what shall be (although that is an aspect of it!), but “congratulations” now from and by JESUS, **on what is!** It is like JESUS is literally saying “Congratulations for being!”

But “congratulations”, for what?

Dr. A . T. Pierson puts it this way “When an artist draws a picture, each line may be graceful and masterful, but it is the union of the lines that reveals their mutual relation; it is the combination of the various artistic delineations and minute touches that gives us the complete portrait. So here, though each separate aspect has its own peculiar beauty and grace and shows the hand of a master, it is only when we take all the lines in combination that we get the full portrait of a true subject and citizen in the Kingdom of God.” (Pink, A.W., The Beatitudes and the Lord's prayer pg11+12)

JESUS' FIFTH BLESSING! V7

“Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy”.

What does it mean to show mercy? You could say that it is the ability to show people compassion or forgiveness, when you have the power to harm or punish, remember the Priest!

What is the opposite of mercy? It could be summed up in this way “With the absence of mercy, it is to treat people with cruelty, harshness, even hatred”. Jesus would soon be treated with the absence of mercy!

How do we become programmed when it comes to dealing with people? Through our laws, reinforcing that it is legally right to treat people in a certain way? Is it through our values, the way in which we have been brought up, in our families, culture, experiences? Is it through our beliefs? What we hold dear, our integrity? What shapes us? Perhaps all three, our laws, our values and our beliefs.

Jesus stated in the fourth blessing, that those that hunger and thirst for righteousness, doing the right thing before a holy God, would be filled. This comes through knowing God's will, which is the ultimate standard for doing right, and God reveals His will to us through His Word. Therefore although we are shaped by our laws, values and beliefs, ultimately we need to be shaped by God and His definition of mercy, even when this can go against our laws, values and beliefs!

Think of the story of Ruth and her relationship with her mother – in – law, and the way in which Ruth kept on acting towards her!

JESUS' SIXTH BLESSING V8

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God”.

William Barclay states that the Greek word for ‘pure is “*katharos*”. This had a variety of uses, all of which add to the meaning of the beatitude. Originally meant ‘clean’, regularly used for corn which had been winnowed, cleansed of all chaff. Also used of an army purged of all discontent, cowardly, and inefficient soldiers.

William Hendriksen suggests that pure in heart is “sincerity, honesty, free of guile, integrity, all at play here, but more than just these. This is because this beatitude is not given without qualification upon all people who are sincere, but rather upon those who, in the worship of the true God in accordance with the truth revealed in his Word, strive without hypocrisy to please and glorify him.”

W. Pink notes that “ Purity of heart does not mean sinlessness of life. The truth is that one of the most conclusive evidences that we do possess a pure heart is the discovery and consciousness of the impurity of the old heart dwelling side by side with the new.”

One of the ways to view the first 4 beatitudes is to see how the individual relates to God, and in light of this radical transformation, how they relate to others in the next 5 beatitudes. It is in light of the glorious inward transformation, brought about by the power of Jesus, that enables the person to relate so fundamentally to others in our broken, yet beautiful world!

APPLCATION

The plug needs re-wiring!

Let Jesus re-wire us with the gospel life-style norms and see what happens.

Isn't this, v3-8, an attractive human being?