

THE BIG IDEA: Live in such a way that your relationships reveal the cross.The Take-Off

If you were with us last week, you probably remember the song we ended the service with.

It was called SOS and it could basically be summed up as “Help me, Lord!”

I bring this up because there could be multiple times this morning that you feel like that - you have my permission to pray that prayer as needed.

I know I'll be praying it AS I preach! ;)

And with that as an intro, let's jump into Matt. 5:3-12, a section of the Sermon on the Mount known as the Beatitudes. Before we read it, keep this in mind: there called the BEatitudes, not the DOatitudes

This is really important, because we're going to talk a lot this morning about how we live, but living starts with being. These verses are all about relationships - with God and man - and what they look like in the lives of Kingdom citizens. Just remember that the verses we're going to read describe WHO WE ARE as Jesus followers more than what we do as Jesus followers

But who we are impacts what we do - and these verses paint a picture of who we are

Let's read and you'll see what I mean

Matthew 5:3-12 (NLT)

Were you able to hear how relational these beatitudes are? Jesus shares with us 8 traits that should mark our relationships with God and with others

Before we dive deep, let's get the Big Idea down: **live in such a way that your relationships reveal the cross**

This will make more and more sense as we go, but for now, just make note of it

1. Vertical first

- a. When we think about relationships, there are only 2 directions they can go: vertical and horizontal
- b. The Beatitudes are split right down the middle
- c. Jesus takes the first 4 Beatitudes to deal with the **vertical first**
- d. First, we're blessed when we're POOR IN SPIRIT
 - This isn't about physical poverty, although physical poverty is often an accelerator for recognizing our need for God
 - That's what this phrase is referencing
 - The NLT says it best: God blesses those who “realize their need for Him”
 - You can't be in the place of blessing without being in the place of dependence
 - This runs 100% counter to our “I did it on my own” American ideal
 - Why would we consider this a blessed state?
 - Because of what it opens us up to receive - the Kingdom of Heaven
 - “Kingdom of Heaven” is used by Matthew because his audience was Jewish and he avoided using God's name whenever possible, but Kingdom of Heaven and Kingdom of God are the same
 - Refers to God being the ruling King who brings complete redemption and freedom more so than just a geographical region
 - The Kingdom is “theirs” not in a possessive sense (the Kingdom is mine) as much as in a being possessed sense (I am in the Kingdom)
 - Theirs IS the Kingdom / “is” emphasizes confidence and certainty / it has already taken place - not a future hope but a present reality
- e. Second, we're blessed when we MOURN
 - This isn't about physical poverty, although physical poverty is often an accelerator for recognizing our need for God
 - The reference to mourning isn't as much about mourning the death of someone as much as it refers to sadness and grief because of wickedness and oppression
 - According to William Barclay, this is the strongest Greek word for mourning and means feeling utterly and sorrowfully hopeless
 - What could cause a person to feel such deep despair? Personal and corporate sin, wickedness and oppression, the world's suffering and continued unwillingness to turn to the God who can comfort them.

- They WILL BE comforted
 - How does God comfort us? By forgiving us, delivering us, strengthening us. It all comes through Christ.
- f. Third, we're blessed when we're MEEK
- To be meek means to be humble, gentle, non-aggressive, willing to suffer wrong rather than injure others. It carries the ideas of insignificant, lowly. It means God-controlled and relying on God.
 - Meekness doesn't mean being a doormat, but it can mean being treated like one
 - Jesus used this word to describe Himself in [Matthew 11:29](#).
 - It was not a quality valued in Greco-Roman culture and would not be a characteristic expected in someone who would inherit the earth!
 - But that's exactly what happens...
 - The meek WILL inherit the earth. (Note the future tense - it indicates certainty)
 - Inherit means to acquire something that the present occupants no longer possess
 - The earth means the entire earth - the regenerated and redeemed earth
- g. Fourth, we're blessed when we're SPIRITUALLY HUNGRY AND THIRSTY
- To be meek means to be humble, gentle, non-aggressive, willing to suffer wrong rather than injure others. It carries the ideas of insignificant, lowly. It means God-controlled and relying on God.
 - This is an interesting quality, and it's been translated lots of ways
 - Most version say "hunger"
 - TEV says "those whose greatest desire is"
 - CEV "those who want to obey Him more than eat or drink"
 - To hunger and thirst is to have an earnest yearning and relentless pursuit
 - These are deep longings, not passing feelings
 - For what? Righteousness - things to be made right, esp their own righteousness
 - They will be satisfied
 - It's a passive verb meaning we can't satisfy ourselves - only God can satisfy
 - He won't barely feed us - He will fully satisfy us; this is "big belly, unbuckle belt" satisfied!!
 - What will we be full of? Jesus - the One who makes us righteous - which is what we hunger and thirst for.
- h. Notice the progression: first, we've got to recognize our spiritual poverty - our need for a Savior; second, we mourn the sin that puts us there; third, the comforting grace that forgave us of our sins creates a meek and humble heart that, fourth, hungers to be in right relation with God and His kingdom.
- i. That's what the vertical markers look like in the lives of Jesus followers.

2. Horizontal second

- a. Now, onto the next 4, all of which deal with how we relate to people around us
- b. If vertical was first, then it's **horizontal second**
- c. First, we get the relationship with God right, and then we're ready for others. Beatitudes 5-8 address this.
- d. Fifth, we're blessed when we're MERCIFUL
- To be merciful is have a concern, love, and sorrow for the situations of others
 - It's intentional kindness, generosity
 - It is relational and is both feeling and action
 - The language structure lacks an object which indicates that this is a general characteristic and not just applied in a specific situation
 - What is the reward when we show mercy?
 - We're shown mercy - but from God, not necessarily from those we showed mercy to.
- e. Sixth, we're blessed when we are PURE IN HEART
- undefiled, clean, acceptable to God
 - This refers to the motives of the heart (yikes!!)
 - This is a work of Christ - HE makes us righteous before God
 - We'll see God!
 - [Hebrews 12:14](#)
 - [Psalm 24:3-4](#)
 - Now, for sure, but fully forever!
- f. Seventh, we're blessed when we're PEACEMAKERS

- NOT peacekeepers
 - I love the way the NLT translates this - the one who “works” for peace
 - Peacemaking is the hard work of promoting healthy and right relationships between people
 - In the most general sense, this would be making the world a better place
 - But the reward this mark brings doesn’t allow us to keep this beatitude general
 - We’re called “sons of God”
 - The sense here is that we’ll be recognized as God’s children because children look like their Father
 - Our Father’s heart is reconciliation and His children carry His reconciling DNA ([2 Cor. 5:18-21](#))
- g. Finally, we’re blessed when we are PERSECUTED
- If you’ve ever tried to be a peacemaker, then you understand why persecution is listed next!
 - Some people will not appreciate us no matter what how good and pure our intentions are for helping them
 - The qualifier is that we’re persecuted for doing right, not for doing stupid :)
 - The word for “right” may be “righteousness” in your translation - it implies that our lives and conduct are oriented towards God and His will

The Landing

Admittedly this has been a thick message - A LOT to think over and process, but let me drop one more bomb on y’all before we land it

We can’t only choose horizontal or vertical. In order to live in such a way that our relationships reveal the cross, it’s got to be **both always**

- Some focus only on the horizontal and make the Beatitudes only social
- Others focus only on the vertical and make the Beatitudes only spiritual

But one without the other doesn’t reveal the cross, and at the end of the day, we need relationships that reveal the goodness and mercy of the cross

Let’s pray.