

Beatitudes I... Sermon on the Mount

Last time:

What does it mean to be blessed? Is it the same as happiness?

Who is responsible for our happiness? Who is responsible for blessings?

blessing: 1a : the act or words of one that blesses

b : approval, encouragement

2. : a thing conducive to happiness or welfare

3. : grace said at a meal *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*

“Blessed are...” – passive

Some have suggested we can view the Beatitudes as a biography of Jesus. Why?

Others see the Beatitudes as God’s promises. How would that be the case?

“The disciples are called blessed because they have obeyed the call of Jesus, and the people as a whole because they are heirs of the promise.” – *Bonhoeffer*

Matthew 5:2-11 (p. 1501)

Blessed are the poor in spirit...

In the Luke version, Jesus says, “Blessed are you who are poor...”

What does Jesus mean by “poor” here? Does being poor make one happy?

In Matthew, “‘the poor in spirit’ brings out the Old Testament and Jewish background of those who in affliction have confidence only in God.”

Dictionary of New Testament Theology

When we have lots of money and possessions, who is in charge of our lives?
The more I have the happier I am!

What made the disciples poor? Why did they become poor?

Can one be rich with money, yet “poor in spirit?”

“‘Poor in spirit’ thus refers neither to those who are poor for religious reasons (the voluntarily poor) nor to those who are deficient with respect to spirit (the dispirited) but rather to those poor who manifest the attitude (the ‘spirit’)

appropriate to their condition, namely, humble dependence on God's grace."
Douglas R.A. Hare

"The Antichrist also calls the poor blessed, but not for the sake of the cross, which embraces all poverty and transforms it into a source of blessing. He fights the cross with political and sociological ideology. He may call it Christian, but that only makes him a still more dangerous enemy." *Bonhoeffer*

So what do the poor receive now? What about for the future?

Blessed are those who mourn...

Mourning was a big deal back in the time of Jesus

How do people mourn today? What do they mourn?

"By 'mourning' Jesus, of course, means doing without what the world calls peace and prosperity: He means refusing to be in tune with the world or to accommodate oneself to its standards. Such men mourn for the world, for its guilt, its fate and its fortune. While the world keeps holiday they stand aside, and while the world sings, 'Gather ye rose-buds while ye may,' they mourn. They see that for all the jollity on board, the ship is beginning to sink. The world dreams of progress, of power and of the future, but the disciples meditate on the end, the last judgment, and the coming of the kingdom."
Bonhoeffer

While our Bible translates the Greek word used in this verse as "mourning," Martin Luther's own translation used "sorrow-bearing."

"The disciple-community does not shake off sorrow [of others] as though it were no concern of its own, but willingly bears it." *Bonhoeffer*

How is the above statement reflect Christ-like actions?

What is the comfort for those who mourn?

Isaiah 61:1-3 (p. 1157)