

The Beatitudes (Sermon on the Mount)
Lesson 1

I. Blessed are the poor in Spirit

Vocabulary:

needy: people who need help

humble: not full of pride

righteousness: integrity, perfection in behavior

mercy: not giving the penalty or punishment someone deserves

strive: to make something a goal

survive: live

self-sufficient: someone who depends only on themselves

Jesus went up on the mountainside. He began to teach his disciples. We call these teachings “the beatitudes” which means heavenly happiness. In these teachings, Jesus tells us how to be spiritually happy. God blesses people who are needy, sad, and humble. He blesses people who seek for righteousness, show mercy, and have pure hearts. God blesses people who seek and strive for peace and who suffer for loving Jesus.

Read Matthew 5: 1-12 (page 1032)

In this study, we will look at each beatitude and its meaning. We will also look at examples of these behaviors throughout scripture. The first beatitude is: Blessed are the poor in Spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The word “poor” means to be a beggar. When someone is a beggar, they need help. They cannot survive on their own. They are not self-sufficient. A person who is poor in spirit has nothing to give God. We can see a wonderful story of a man with a poor spirit in Luke 18. In fact, this story gives us a contrast between a poor spirit and a self-sufficient spirit.

In this story, Jesus talks about a Pharisee and a tax collector. The Pharisee was praying. As he prayed, he spoke loudly so that everyone could hear. The Pharisee told God about all the things that the Pharisee did – how wonderful he was. At the same time, a tax collector was praying. The tax collector was humble – he cried before God and asked for His mercy. The tax collector knew that he was a sinner before God. Jesus said that the tax collector went home accepted by God.

Read Luke 18: 9-14 (page 1114)

We cannot make ourselves acceptable to God. In Romans, we read that no one is right or good before God. The Pharisee thought that his actions made him appear “good” before God. He went to the temple regularly. He obeyed the law and gave money to the poor. But this did not make the Pharisee good. We go to church to worship God. We give money to churches and ministries. But this does not save us.

Nothing that we do can make God accept us. We must come to God knowing that we cannot save ourselves. We cannot earn our salvation by doing good things. We must be poor in spirit. When we are “poor in spirit”, we acknowledge that we cannot work our way to God. We acknowledge that we need help. That help comes from faith in Jesus Christ.

Read Romans 3: 10-12, 21-26 (page 1190); Ephesians 2:8-9 (page 1236)

The second part of this beatitude is: “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” The kingdom of heaven is God’s kingdom. When we are “poor in spirit”, we turn to Christ as our only way to God’ kingdom. When we admit our sins and trust in Jesus, we become part of God’s family. We are His children and God blesses us with eternal life.

Read Romans 10:9, John 3:16

Questions

1. What does the word “beatitude” mean?
2. What are the eight types of people that God blesses?
3. In the 1st beatitude, what does the word “poor” mean?

4. How did the Pharisee pray? What did he pray about?

5. How did the tax collector pray? What did he pray about?

Discussion:

1. How can we be saved? Is it important to “do” things for God? How does this fit in with being “poor in spirit”?

2. What is the kingdom of heaven?

The Beatitudes (Sermon on the Mount)
Lesson 2

II. Blessed are those that mourn.

Vocabulary:

mourn: deep sorrow or sadness

refers to: calls/ says

dependence: to rely on someone

sores: an infected wound

similar: the same as

compassion: deep pity/ to feel sorry for

coffin: a box for burial

weep: to cry

acquainted: to know about something due to experience

The second beatitude is: “Blessed are the people who mourn. They will be comforted.” What does blessed mean? It means to be happy or to be given good things. So this beatitude could be written: Happy are the people who are sad. Why are they happy? They are happy because God promises to comfort them. In the Psalms, the Lord is called our shepherd. Isaiah also refers to the Lord as our shepherd. Psalm 23 and Isaiah 49 says that when we are suffering, the Lord will comfort us.

Read Matt. 5:4 (page 1032), Psalm 23:4 (pg 588), Isaiah 49:13 (pg 786), Isaiah 40:11 (pg 771)

There are two types of sorrow or mourning. One kind of sorrow is when someone close to us dies. The other kind is to be truly sorry for our sins.

There are many examples of people coming to Jesus in their sorrow. Jairus, a synagogue leader, came to Jesus when his daughter was dying. When Jesus reached the man’s house, his daughter had already died. All the family members and friends were crying. Jesus brought the girl back to life. A similar story happened to a widow. The widow’s only son had died. During her son’s funeral, the widow was in great sorrow. Jesus had compassion for her. Jesus touched the coffin and the son came back to life again.

Even Jesus showed sorrow. But his sorrow was for those who were suffering because of a death. Jesus' close friend, Lazarus, had died. Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha were in great sorrow. So were Lazarus' friends. Seeing their sorrow, Jesus began to weep. To show God's power, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

Read Mark 5: 21-24, 35-43 (pg 1070); Luke 7: 11-17 (pg 1097); John 11: 17-44 (pg 1139)

Psalm 51 is a wonderful example of someone who is sorry for his sins. King David wrote this Psalm after he sinned with Bethsheba. David showed his great sorrow and total dependence on God. David understood that his greatest sin was against God.

Read Ps 51: 3-5, 10-12, 17(pg 607)

Another man who showed sorrow for his sin was Job. Job was a godly man – he loved and obeyed God. Satan wanted to put Job to the test. Satan said to God, “Will Job still love you if his life was destroyed?” All of Job's animals were killed and his children died in a windstorm. But Job didn't blame God. Satan gave Job painful sores but still Job trusted God. Later, Job stopped trusting God. Job realized that he had no right to question God. He was very sorry for not trusting God.

Read Job 42: 1-6 (pg 574)

Jesus was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief. The prophet Isaiah spoke of Jesus' life of sorrow and suffering. His sorrow was also because of sin. But his sorrow was not about His sins. Jesus never sinned. But he was sorrowful because of our sins. God placed our sins on Jesus. Jesus' sorrow was for the sins of the world – including yours and mine.

Read Isaiah 53: 3-6 (pg 790)

In Isaiah 61, we read that God sent Jesus to comfort the broken hearted. Jesus was sent to help the sad and sorrowful. Jesus himself uses this passage to preach in a synagogue. Jesus told the people that this scripture was coming true as they listened. This shows that Jesus did come to give us comfort. In a letter to the Corinthians, Paul told the people about God's love. Paul told them that all comfort comes from God. But also,

because God comforts us in our sorrow, we can comfort others who are in sorrow.

Read Isaiah 61: 1-3 (pg 799); Luke 4:18-19 (pg 1093); 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 (pg 1219)

Questions

1. What does “blessed” mean?
2. How can people who are sad (mourn) be happy?
3. What are the two types of sorrow?
4. How are the stories of Jairus and the widow the same?
5. Why did Jesus weep when Lazarus died?
6. When David sinned, who did he sin against?

7. What did Job do that was sinful?

8. Jesus was a man of sorrow. Why was He sorrowful?

9. Jesus came to _____ the broken hearted.

Discussion:

1. When you have sorrow, what do you do?

2. Because God comforts us, we can comfort others. What can we do to comfort people who are mourning?

The Beatitudes (Sermon on the Mount)
Lesson 3

III. Blessed are the meek.

Vocabulary:

considerate: to think about the needs, wishes, and feelings of others

courteous: polite, thinks of others

den: a cave

defend ourselves: to protect our rights

indication: show

seduce: try to make someone respond to you physically

admonished: to tell someone strongly that they did something wrong

imitator: to model yourself after someone else (to be just like someone)

The third beatitude is “Blessed are those who are meek. They will be given the earth.” The Greek word for meekness means to be gentle, humble, considerate, and courteous. A person who is meek does not insist on their “rights”. Instead, they think of other people first. Meekness does not mean weakness. Both Moses and Jesus were meek. However, both of them showed strength and even anger.

Read Matt. 5: 5 (page 1032)/ Numbers 12:3 (pg 151)/ Matt 11:28-30 (pg 1041)

Moses went to Mount Sinai to talk with God. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on two stone tablets. While he was gone, the people of Israel became impatient. They wanted a visible god that they could worship. Aaron made a golden statue of a calf and the people began to worship it. When Moses came down from the mountain, he saw the people worshipping the statue. Moses was so angry that he threw the tablets and they broke.

Read Exodus 32: 1-4, 19-20 (pg 87)

Jesus went to the temple in Jerusalem. He saw people buying and selling animals used for sacrifice. These people were making money in the place of worship. Jesus was very angry. He turned over the tables that the men were using. Jesus told them, “This is a place of worship but you have made it a den for robbers”. Both Moses and Jesus became angry. But their

anger wasn't about themselves. They were angry because God was not being respected. If we are meek, we do not defend ourselves but we are supposed to defend God. Meekness is "power under control".

Read Matthew 21: 12-13 (page 1052)

There are many examples of people in the bible who demonstrated meekness. Abraham and his family moved into the Canaan valley. His family included his nephew Lot. There was quarreling between the servants of Abraham and Lot. Abraham decided that the two families should separate. Abraham showed meekness as he allowed Lot to take the best land for his family.

Another example of meekness can be seen in Joseph. Joseph's brothers were jealous of him. They were so jealous that they threw Joseph into a well. The brothers then sold Joseph to some traders. There is no indication that Joseph tried to fight back. Joseph was taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar. Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph. Joseph responded by running away from her. Then Potiphar's wife lied about Joseph. She told Potiphar that Joseph tried to attack her. Potiphar put Joseph in prison. Again, Joseph did not try to explain.

Read Genesis 13: 5-11 (pg 12), Genesis 37: 23-24, 28 (pg 39),
Genesis 39: 1-2, 7-9, 12-20 (pg 40)

David is another example of a man who was meek. In I Samuel, we read that Saul was king of Israel. Saul had much power but he disobeyed God. So God chose David as a young man to be the future king. With God's power, David killed Goliath. Goliath was a Philistine who was feared by the army of Israel. The people of Israel praised David and Saul became jealous. King Saul wanted to kill David but David ran away from Saul. David could have stayed to fight Saul but he chose to leave instead. King Saul took his army to find David. Saul went into a cave. David and his men were in the back of the cave. Very carefully, David approached Saul without being seen. He cut off a piece of Saul's robe. Again, David could have killed Saul but he didn't.

Read I Samuel 24: 3-6, 11-13, 16-19 (pg 311)

Jesus Christ gives us the most important example of meekness. When Jesus was arrested, he willingly went with the soldiers. During His arrest,

one of his disciples cut the ear off a servant of the High priest. Jesus admonished his disciple. Jesus appeared before Pilate who was governor. Pilate wanted Jesus to respond to the charges against Him. But Jesus wouldn't reply. Jesus didn't try to defend Himself. Even when the soldiers spat on Him and beat Him, Jesus did not respond.

Read Matthew 26: 47-54 (pg 1060), Matt 27: 11-14, 27-31 (pg 1062)

In the book of Philippians, Paul writes that we are to be imitators of Christ. This means that Jesus is our model and we are to be like Him. Jesus was one with God but He gave up his power. Jesus emptied Himself and took the form of a servant. This means that Jesus gave up His rights as God and became a man. This is true meekness. When Jesus came to earth, He came to serve. In the book of John, we have a beautiful example of Jesus the servant. Jesus knew that His time on earth was almost done. He wanted to show his disciples how much He loved them. After an evening meal, Jesus took a bowl of water and a towel. He knelt down before the disciples and washed their feet. Jesus' act of service was an act of love.

Read Philippians 2: 3-11(pg 1242), John 13: 1-9 (pg 1142)

Ultimately, to be meek is to show love. The bible says to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. But Jesus says to love even more. Jesus says to love your enemies and pray for those who hurt you. In 2 Timothy, Paul writes that we should not fight but instead we must be kind to everyone. He says that we should gently teach those who oppose us. When we are kind and gentle, God may use us to change the hearts of our enemies.

Mark 12: 30-31(pg 1080), Matthew 5: 43-45 (pg 1034), 2 Timothy 2:24-25 (pg 1261)

Questions

1. What is meekness?
2. Why did Moses and Jesus show anger?

3. How did the following people show meekness?

Abraham:

Joseph:

David:

Jesus:

4. What does it mean to be imitators of Christ?

5. How did Jesus show true meekness when he became a man?

6. What did Jesus say about our neighbors and our enemies?

Discussion:

1. What does meekness mean to you? Describe a situation where someone responded with meekness.

2. This beatitude says that the meek will be given the earth. What does this mean? (consider 2 Peter 3:13, Romans 4:13)

The Beatitudes (Sermon of the Mount)
Lesson 4

IV. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Vocabulary:

satisfied: completely filled/ you don't need anything else

transferred: was given to

pursue: to go after; to seek for

aim for: to make something your goal

The fourth beatitude is: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. What is righteousness? Righteousness means to be completely right and just – always doing what is right and honorable. Noah was an example of a righteous man. In Genesis, he is called godly and without blame. John the Baptist was also known as a righteous man. In Proverbs, we read about some characteristics of a righteous or godly person. A godly person doesn't fall into sin. Godly people are truthful. They even choose their friends carefully.

Read Genesis 6: 9(page 6), Mark 6:20 (page 1071), Proverbs 12: 13, 22, 26 (page 684)

Can we be righteous? In Psalms 143, David says that in God's eyes, no person does what is right. Both Ecclesiastes and Romans tell us that no one on earth does what is right and never sins. So the bible tells us that we cannot be righteous on our own. But the good news is that Jesus is righteous. Jesus is the exact likeness of God and He provided a way for people to be righteous. Jesus' death satisfied God's requirement for righteousness. Jesus' righteousness is transferred to us when we believe in Him.

Read Psalms 143: 2 (page 668), Ecclesiastes 7:20 (page 713), Romans 3:10-12 (page 1190), Hebrews 1: 3, 8-9 (page 1267), Isaiah 53:11 (page 791), Romans 5: 17-19 (page 1192), Romans 1:16-17 (page 1188), I Corinthians 1: 30 (page 1205)

Jesus gives us His righteousness but the bible says that we are to pursue righteousness. We should long for righteousness. Proverbs 21 says that if we pursue righteousness, we will find life. The apostle Paul wrote to

Timothy who was in charge of the churches in Ephesus. Paul said. “Aim for righteousness.”

Read Proverbs 21:21 (page 695), I Timothy 6:11 (page 1258)

We should pursue righteousness. But, even more, we should hunger and thirst after righteousness. The Greek word for “hunger” means to be famished. This means to be very hungry. It means to be so hungry that food is all you can think of. We should also thirst after righteousness. Think about being in the desert under the hot sun. Your mouth becomes so dry that water is all you think about. Jesus said, “I am the bread of life.” No one who comes to Jesus will be hungry or thirsty. One day, Jesus went to Samaria. He sat down by a well and a woman came to get water. Jesus told her, “Anyone who drinks the water I give will never be thirsty. This water will become a spring of water flowing into eternal life”. When we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we really hunger and thirst after Jesus.

Read John 6: 26-35 (page 1132), John 4: 4-13 (page 1128)

The second part of this beatitude says, “..for they will be satisfied”. When we hunger and thirst after righteousness, only Jesus can satisfy us. But what does it really mean to “hunger and thirst after righteousness”? It means that we should desire Jesus more than anything else. We desire to be like Jesus in all that we do. When we concentrate on Jesus and seek to do God’s will, we are truly satisfied. Jesus is all that we ever need.

Read Psalms 107:9 (page 647), Jeremiah 31:25 (page 849)

Questions

1. What is righteousness?

2. What are some characteristics of a righteous person?

3. Does God think people are righteous? What does the bible say?

4. Who or what can make us righteous before God?

5. In this beatitude, what does the word “hunger” mean?

6. What did Jesus say about the bread of life?

7. What did Jesus say to the Samaritan woman at the well?

8. What does “hunger and thirst after righteousness” mean?

Discussion:

1. What does righteousness mean to you?

2. The opposite of being satisfied is to long for something. What do you long for? How can you be satisfied?

The Beatitudes (Sermon on the Mount)
Lesson 5

V. Blessed are those who show mercy.

Vocabulary:

compassion: to feel sorry for someone, to have pity

deserve: to have earned something or to be worthy of something

interact: to talk with, or spend time with

to move outside: to go beyond

cultural norms: behaviors, thoughts and actions of a culture

leprosy: a serious skin disease

ostracized: to keep someone from being part of something

outcasts: people who society does not want to associate with

stone someone: kill a person by throwing stones at them

retaliate: to hurt someone who has hurt you

The fifth beatitude is: Blessed are those who show mercy. They will be shown mercy. What is mercy? The word mercy means to show kindness and compassion to someone who does not deserve it. Notice the word “show” – this means to demonstrate. Mercy is a physical action of compassion to another person. But mercy is also forgiveness. Mercy is the love of God that forgives. If we look at the definition of mercy, we see the words “.....to someone who does not deserve it”. This is forgiveness.

Read Matthew 5: 7 (page 1032)

There are many examples of acts of compassion in the bible. One of the most important stories is a parable that Jesus told – the parable of the Good Samaritan. A man came to Jesus who was an authority on Jewish law. This man knew the important commandments – to love God with your heart, soul, mind, and strength – and to love your neighbor as you love yourself. But he asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus told him the following story. A man was going to Jericho. He was attacked by robbers. They beat him and left him for dead. Both a priest and a Levite saw the man but they passed by without helping. A man from Samaria saw the injured man and had compassion. The Samaritan bandaged the man’s wounds. He took the injured man to an Inn where he would be safe and comfortable.

What makes this story so important is that it involves a Jewish man and a Samaritan man. In the Jewish culture, Jews did not interact with Samaritans. To the Jews, a neighbor could only be another Jew. Through this parable, Jesus is teaching us to move outside of our cultural norms. He is teaching us to care about people our society calls unimportant or bad. Jesus wants us to care about people who are from different cultures. He wants us to love people who have different views or different life styles.

Read Luke 10: 25-37 (page 1103)

During Jesus' life on earth, He showed mercy to people who were considered low in society. If a person had leprosy, he was unclean. Lepers had to live by themselves and were ostracized by society. Jesus did not turn away from lepers. He healed many lepers and even went to dinner at the home of a leper. Jesus cared for other people who were outcasts. In the book of John, some Pharisees brought a woman to Jesus. She had committed adultery and the Pharisees wanted to stone her. Jesus had compassion for her.

Read Matthew 8: 1-4 (page 1036), Luke 17: 11-19 (page 1113), Matthew 26: 6 (page 1059), John 8: 1-11 (page 1135)

When we show mercy, we do not retaliate. Jesus talks about this in Matthew chapter 5. There are laws in the Old Testament that say "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". That means if someone harms you, you should harm them. But Jesus changed this law. Jesus said, "Don't fight back. Instead, be willing to do whatever the person wants." You must be willing to go the extra mile. By doing this, you are showing mercy and forgiveness.

Our model for forgiveness is Jesus. Even when Jesus hung on the cross dying, He was full of mercy and forgiveness. When Jesus was on the cross, He prayed, "Father, forgive them for they don't know what they're doing." Jesus asked God to forgive the people who were putting Him to death. That's true forgiveness.

Read Matthew 5: 38-42 (page 1034), Luke 23: 32-34 (page 1122)

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 9 that God desires mercy more than sacrifice. To understand this, we must look at the context of this statement.

Jesus met Matthew who was a tax collector. Jesus told Matthew, “Follow me.” Afterward, Jesus went to Matthew’s home. Tax collectors were hated in the Jewish society. Some Pharisees asked why Jesus ate with sinners. Jesus told the Pharisees to learn what “God desires mercy...” means. In this story, it means that we should not judge other people. We are supposed to show them mercy. Jesus talked about not judging others in Matthew chapter 7. Jesus said that we must really think about our own sin when we are tempted to judge someone.

Read Matthew 9: 9-13 (page 1037), Matt 7: 1-6 (page 1035)

The second part of this beatitude says “They will be shown mercy.” What does this mean? We receive mercy from God when we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior. As God changes our hearts, we become more merciful to those around us. We become more merciful when we realize how much mercy God shows to us.

Questions

1. What is mercy?
2. What does the phrase “...to someone who does not deserve it” mean?
3. What makes the story about the Good Samaritan so important? What is Jesus teaching us?
4. Who did Jesus show mercy to?

5. What does “retaliate” mean? What did Jesus say about this?

6. How did Jesus show true forgiveness?

7. How does mercy relate to judging others?

Discussion:

1. What can we do to show mercy to people we meet?

2. Why do we judge other people? Who do we judge? How can we keep from judging others?

The Beatitudes (Sermon on the Mount)
Lesson 6

VI. Blessed are the pure in heart.

Vocabulary:

organ: parts of the body that have a special job

essence: the core, what we are made of

conscience: the sense of what is right and what is wrong

natural: normal

motives: reasons that you do something

The sixth beatitude is: “Blessed are the pure in heart. They will see God.” To understand this beatitude, we must first learn what the Bible means by the word “heart”. In the Bible, the heart is not just an organ in our body. It is our essence. The heart is our conscience, our desires, and our emotions. God wants us to love Him with our whole heart. This means that our desires, conscious thought, and emotions should be on God.

Read Matthew 5:8 (page 1032), Deuteronomy 6: 4-5 (page 192)

What is the natural condition of our hearts? The prophet Jeremiah says that the heart is totally dishonest. Jesus also referred to the heart as the place from where evil thoughts come. Jesus was talking about the Pharisees. The Pharisees were only concerned about outward appearances. But their motives, thoughts, and hearts were wrong. In Proverbs 6, we see that God hates 7 things. One of the seven things that God hates is a heart that plans evil.

Read Jeremiah 17: 9-10 (page 831), Matthew 15: 10-20 (page 1046),
Proverbs 6: 16-19 (page 678)

We cannot hide our hearts from God. God searches our hearts. If we seek after God with our hearts, God will reveal Himself. What kind of heart does God seek? God seeks for the person who has a pure heart. What does pure mean? It means to be blameless, to do what is truthful, and to actively seek after God. Sometimes it is helpful to understand what is pure by looking at the opposite. In Psalm 73, there is an example of both conditions.

The Psalmist begins by saying that God is good to those who have a pure heart. But as he continues, the Psalmist's heart turns from being pure. He begins to envy proud and sinful people. Instead of looking to God, he begins to turn his eyes to the people around him. The Psalmist began to think that he wasn't earning anything by keeping his heart pure. All the sinful people around him were becoming richer and richer. But the Psalmist again put his eyes on God. He realized that God would guide him. In verse 25, we see the pure heart of this Psalmist. He says, "I don't want anyone in heaven or earth but you, God. You are everything I need."

Read Act 15: 8 (page 1170), I Chronicles 28: 9-10 (page 456), Psalm 24: 3-6 (page 589), Psalm 73: 1-3, 21-28 (page 621)

So how can we make our hearts pure? First, only God can create a pure heart. After David sinned, he asked God to create a pure heart in him. We must be repentant and willing to change but God does the action. Second, we must read God's word. Psalm 119 says, "I have hidden your word in my heart so that I won't sin against you." How do we hide God's word in our hearts? We read the Bible, and memorize important verses of scripture. Why is this important? Because when difficulties or dangers happen, we need to have the answer immediately. Third, we must obey God's commands. The words that we read in the Bible should become part of our lives.

Read Psalms 51: 10-12 (page 607), Psalms 119: 9-16 (page 654), and Psalms 19: 7-14 (page 586)

Questions

1. What does the bible mean by the word "heart"?

2. What is the natural condition of our hearts?

3. What kind of heart does God seek?

4. What does pure mean?

5. How can we make our hearts pure?

The Beatitudes (Sermon on the Mount)
Lesson 7

VII. Blessed are the Peacemakers

Vocabulary:

participate: to be a part of something (to join in)

conquer: to be successful in battle

inner: inside

settles: calms

The seventh beatitude is “Blessed are those who make peace. They will be called sons of God.” There are different definitions of the word “peace”. One definition is that peace is the opposite of war. Many people think that this beatitude means that you should not participate in war. But wars will happen. Jesus even talks about wars in Matthew 24. Wars ultimately are the result of sin in this world.

Read Matthew 5: 9 (page 1032), Matthew 24: 6-14 (page 1056)

This beatitude was meant for the Jewish leaders. Jesus wanted the Jewish leaders to understand that the Messiah came to give peace. Many of the prophecies in Isaiah talk about a King who will conquer and rule. The Pharisees thought that the Messiah would come and physically take over the Roman Empire. They didn’t understand that these prophecies were for the future – when Jesus will come again to rule the world. God made a covenant of peace with Israel when Jesus will rule as King and prince forever.

Read Isaiah 40: 10 (page 771), Isaiah 9: 6-7(page 736), Ezekiel 37: 24-28 (page 931)

A second kind of peace is a spiritual peace. We gain spiritual peace with God through salvation in Jesus Christ. In a letter to the Ephesian churches, Paul reminds the Ephesians that before they accepted Christ, they were separated from God. Paul tells them that Christ is our peace. Christ not only provides peace with God but also peace between people. There is now peace between Jews and Gentiles in Christ. We are all one body and members of God’s family.

Read Romans 5: 1(page 1192), Colossians 1: 20 (page 1245), Ephesians 2: 11-22 (page 1236)

A third kind of peace is inner peace. This is the peace that God gives us in times of trouble. Just before Jesus went to the cross, He wanted to give comfort to His disciples. Jesus wanted them to know that He would not leave them alone. Jesus told His disciples that He would give peace to them. This type of peace settles our hearts and minds when we are troubled.

Read John 16:33 (page 1146), John 14: 27-31 (page 1144), Philippians 4: 6-7 (page 1244)

The final kind of peace is peace between people. Like so many of the other beatitudes, this is a matter of the heart. To be peacemakers, our hearts must be centered on Jesus, not ourselves. But what do we do? We fight, we argue, we want things to happen our way. We need to obey God and come close to Him. How can we obtain peace? We must trust in God and be faithful to Him. We must actively pursue peace and allow peace to control our hearts.

Read James 4:1-8 (page 1281), Isaiah 26:3 (page 754), I Peter 3:11(page 1285), Colossians 3: 12-15 (page 1247)

The second part of this beatitude says “They will be called sons of God.” Who are the sons or children of God? Whoever accepts and believes in Jesus. Children of God are led by the Holy Spirit. Children of God imitate Jesus. If you are a child of God, you will strive to be a peacemaker.

Read John 1:12-13 (page 1125), I John 3: 1-10 (page 1292)

Questions

1. What are the 4 definitions (kinds) of peace?

2. Why do we have wars?

3. What did Jesus want the Jewish leaders to understand?

4. How do we get spiritual peace?

5. What is inner peace?

6. How is peace related to our hearts?

Discussion:

What kind of behaviors would a “peacemaker” have?

What can we do to be more like “peacemakers” to our family, friends, and co-workers?

The Beatitudes (Sermon on the Mount)
Lesson 8

VIII. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake.

Vocabulary:

suffer: physical, mental, or emotional pain or discomfort

disabled: physical or mental difficulty

Sabbath: Saturday - a holy day set aside to worship God

confronted: to tell someone that they did something wrong

stoned: kill someone by throwing stones at them

retaliate: to do something bad to someone because they have hurt you

ultimate: final

The final beatitude is “Blessed are those who suffer for doing what is right. The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.” In many versions of the Bible, the words for “those who suffer” are written as “those who are persecuted”. The Greek word for “persecute” means to chase after or pursue. This beatitude is very important. We can see how important it is. This is the only beatitude that is repeated. Also, this beatitude has 3 verses. All of the other beatitudes are only 1 verse long.

The persecution or suffering we receive is for doing what is right. We are persecuted when we show righteousness. There is a reason why this beatitude is last. This beatitude is connected to all of the previous beatitudes. When we begin to show characteristics found in the beatitudes (poor in spirit, meekness, pure heart, showing mercy, etc.), we become very different from the world. As we become more different, people begin to hate us.

Read Matt. 5: 10-12 (page 1032), 2 Timothy 3: 10-14 (page 1262)

Jesus gives us the best example of someone who suffered for doing what is right. In John 5, we read that Jesus healed a disabled man on the Sabbath. The Jewish leaders became very angry. There were Jewish rules about the Sabbath and Jesus was not following them. In Matthew, we read that Jesus returned to Nazareth, His hometown. He began to teach in the synagogue. But the people did not want to hear from Him. They didn't believe what Jesus told them. Finally, Jesus suffered as He was spat on,

whipped, and beaten. Then, Jesus endured the greatest suffering - death on a cross.

The world hated Jesus. In John 15, Jesus told His disciples that the world would hate them also. Jesus reminded them that a servant is not better or more important than his master. This means that we should expect to suffer just as Jesus suffered. We should not be surprised when we experience persecution.

Read John 5: 1-18 (page 1130), Matt. 13: 53-58 (page 1044), Matt. 26: 57-68 (page 1061), John 15: 18-27 (page 1145)

The book of Acts shows us many examples of believers who were persecuted for their faith. Peter and John were preaching about Jesus. Peter even healed a disabled man in Jesus' name. The rulers of the temple had both Peter and John arrested. The rulers warned Peter and John to stop preaching about Jesus. However, Peter, John, and the other apostles continued to talk about Jesus and heal people in Jesus' name. Later, the Jewish leaders became jealous of the apostles. They put all the apostles in prison. During the night, an angel rescued the apostles.

Stephen was a godly man. He performed many miracles and strongly preached about Jesus. The Jewish leaders arrested him. When Stephen stood before the Jewish leaders, he confronted them about Jesus. The leaders were so angry that they stoned Stephen to death.

Probably the most persecuted man in the book of Acts was Saul. Saul was a Pharisee and a teacher of the Jewish law. He was involved in persecuting Stephen. But Jesus appeared to Saul and changed Saul's heart. Immediately after Saul's encounter with Jesus, he began to preach in the synagogues. Shortly after this, the Jewish leaders planned to kill Saul.

Read Acts 4: 1-4 (page 1156), Acts 5: 12-20 (page 1158), Acts 7: 54-60 (page 1161), Acts 9: 19-24 (page 1163)

How should we respond to persecution? We must bless the people who want to hurt us. Don't retaliate. Instead, we should show kindness and gentleness. God is the ultimate judge. We need to let God handle our persecutors. Even though we suffer, God does not desert us. God renews our spirits. Our hope is not in this world but in Heaven.

The last part of this beatitude says that "The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them." This is our goal - the hope of our salvation.

Read Romans 12: 14-21 (page 1200), I Corinthians 4: 12-13 (page 1206), 2 Corinthians 4: 8-18 (page 1221).

Questions

1. What does the word "persecute" mean?
2. How do we know that this is an important beatitude?
3. Why are we persecuted?
4. In what ways did Jesus suffer persecution?
5. Why should we expect to be persecuted?
6. Why were the apostles persecuted?
7. How should we respond to persecution?