

BE ATTITUDES

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Preacher: Rev Iain Macleay

[0 : 0 0] I want to look with you together this morning at the first part of the Sermon on the Mount, and the first part which is known as the Beatitudes.

I just changed the wording just a little of that, and it's not that I want to be interfering with God's word, I certainly wouldn't want to do that, but I want to think of them as B-Attitudes.

But what Jesus describes here in these words are attitudes, ways of life, ways of living that he wants you and me to be.

Jesus had begun his earthly ministry and then took his disciples aside onto a mountain, sat down and began to teach.

The following teaching of the Sermon on the Mount was spoken, I'm sure for many reasons, but in particular so that those who were his closest disciples and those who would follow him would know what was expected of them.

[1 : 35] And what was expected of them was that in this world, in the last couple of verses I've already read for us, that God's people are to be liked and are to be sold.

That we are to be good for this world. We're to be a blessing in this world. We're to make a difference in this world.

That longing that the Olympic movement has to make for a better, a more peaceful, a fairer world is a wonderful longing.

But that's what Jesus wants more than any Olympic movement. That his world will be that peaceful, loving, caring, fair place.

That's what Jesus wants.

[illegible]

Can I ask a question this morning? Do you ever dream? And I'm not asking this. Halfway through the night. Do you ever dream when you look at this world?

And in that dream just have this longing for a better world. Or when you're disappointed, when you're let down, when you're perhaps in despair.

Because those people that you're looking to, to make it a better world, are almost doing the opposite. And Jesus is saying to his people, then as he says to us now, you can make this a better world.

You can make this a better place, not just for you to live in, but for everybody to live in. You can be salt that will bring savour and that will preserve the good in this world.

[4 : 38] You can be the light that will dispel the darkness in this world. You can be that person.
And we must believe that.

We must dream that. We must long for that. We must pray for that. And live it out in our own lives. So I want us just, very briefly this week and next week, just to look at these Beatitudes.

And there is so much in it. But we'll just, this morning take a look at the first three, just very simply and very briefly.

So Jesus sits down and he begins to teach. This is the message that I've come to show you. You've seen me already doing miracles. But this is, this is the nitty gritty.

This is the message that I've come to bring. This is the message I've come to share. And this is the message which I want you to share also. This is the message that the world needs.

[5 : 48] And so he begins, blessed are the poor in spirit. The word blessed is a wonderful word.

But when Jesus uses it, and our language doesn't give it its full meaning. But he's saying to them there with an explanation, with an enthusiasm, saying to them, oh the blessedness.

This is something that is really blessed. This is something that is really wonderful. This is something that just makes all the difference in your life as you trust him.

Here and now, blessedness. Not just a blessedness that we will one day receive when this life is over, if we've been following Jesus.

But a blessedness in the here and now. A blessedness that makes a difference in your life and my life in the here and now.

[6 : 57] A blessedness that makes a difference in the lives of others in the here and now. By now you'll know that I'm not a Greek scholar.

But Cyprus was called by the Greeks, head makarios. The Greeks, head makarios.

Which means the happy isle. And it was known as the happy isle. The blessed isle. Because they felt that it was such a fertile, such a beautiful place.

That nobody needed to go beyond its shores to find a perfectly happy life. There was enough for everybody to meet all their needs in this blessed, in this happy life.

We know that happiness will have been affected by many things and will have fallen short in many ways, then and since then.

[8 : 08] The joy, blessedness, that true happiness that Jesus brings.

That Jesus offers to us freely in the Gospel, along with all the other blessings of the Gospel. That joy, that blessedness, is a joy which is untouchable and is independent of all the chances and changes that happen in our life.

When Jesus is speaking to his disciples in John chapter 16 and verse 22, he says, Your joy no one will take away from you. The peace that Jesus gives is a peace that the world cannot give.

The joy that he gives is a joy that the world cannot give. And it's a peace and a joy that the world cannot ever take away. So this is blessedness in its fullest sense, in its most real sense.

Life in all its fullness and life in the here and now. I often think of Moses when he spoke these last words to the children of Israel.

[9 : 25] And this is before any of the blessings that we know of through Jesus and the Gospel. And he says to them, O blessed are you, O Israel, who is like you.

People saved by the Lord. The Lord's people are a blessed, happy, joyful people. But then Jesus goes on to say this, and it perhaps doesn't seem to sit very well with us.

Because he says, blessed are the poor in spirit. I just want to move on to this, just really quite briefly, but to sum up what I think the teaching is within it.

An acknowledgement of spiritual bankruptcy is the first step in getting right with God.

That's where it all begins.

[10 : 45] I was thinking of the hymn Rock of Ages, and just the sentiment, the feeling, the truth that comes out in that hymn. Nothing in my hand I bring.

Naked, come to thee for dress. Helplessness, look to thee for grace. Foul I to the fountain fly.

Wash me, Saviour, or I die. That awareness of spiritual bankruptcy, of being without God and without hope in the world, being that step to becoming right with God.

So we come as those who are poor. Those with nothing in our hand to bring. Simply to the cross we cling.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. And that's the poverty that's being looked at particularly. That's where Jesus wanted to bring these people to awareness that without God, there were nothing who could do nothing.

[11 : 59] But in him, with him, they were a truly blessed people. And to develop that, he says, blessed are those who mourn.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 7 and verse 10, Paul says, Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret.

And the sense in which this word is spoken is a continual mourning, a continual experience of grief. And that's difficult to understand because in our way of thinking, there's nothing good, there's nothing blessed about mourning.

Every one of us, I'm sure, here today have experienced something of grief in our own lives, loss that has caused us to mourn. And you would say, well, that's not good.

But alongside of that, we have all the promises of God and the assurance that in that grief, in that mourning, in that loss that we experience in our lives, we have a God and a Savior who promises to be with us in it.

[13 : 24] We will be comforted. That's why he promises it. The psalmist has it so vividly when he says, you know, this God who made the stars, who made the sky, who holds everything in place, is the same God who comes down and kneels beside and heals the broken hearted.

So we have all the promises of God's word and we won't go through grief and hard times, but we have all these promises. But that is not the mourning, I think, that Jesus is referring to here.

He's speaking about a mourning that comes naturally, that progresses from the first of the Beatitudes. the poor in spirit and then to mourn.

So I think he's speaking about spiritual mourning. That godly sorrow that leads to dependence.

That godly sorrow when God is working in our lives and we see sin for what it really is.

[14 : 34] You may think that I'm speaking about things that are maybe not particularly encouraging, but just listen for a moment.

This sorrow, this godly sorrow that leads to repentance, when we see sin for what it really is and what it really does in our own lives and in our own community and in our own world.

That poverty of spirit which leads to conviction, that mourning, that grief which leads to contrition, to repentance and causes us tears.

Sin, Thomas Watson, a theologian from the past, said, sin must have tears. sin. So there's poverty of spirit, there's mourning, there's grief.

A.W. Tozer, who has written many books that some of you may have read in the past, says that in the majority of our meetings there is scarcely a trace of reverent thought, no recognition of the unity of the body, little sense of the divine presence, no moment of stillness, no wonder, no holy fear.

- [16 : 13] The whole Christian family stands desperately in need of a restoration of penitence, humility and tears. So what Jesus is speaking about here is not something that should discourage us and bring us down, not at all.

This is not speaking about people having a poor self-image. It's not speaking about people who always see the black side, the dark side of things.

This is a blessedness, just to sum it up very briefly. This is a blessedness, a happiness, a true happiness, that those who have their hearts tenderised by the Holy Spirit and grieve over all that is dishonouring to God.

Sorrow that brings genuine tears repentance. And that's blessedness.

Because that brings us to the place where we are right with God and then can begin to work on making things right with others.

- [17 : 43] Whether it's within family, whether it's within the church family or whether it's further afield. Paul shed lots of tears.

We looked at Paul's laugh at the church last Sunday and in Acts chapter 20 he tells them just how day after day, week after week, month after month, he's shedding tears as he prays for the church in his day.

Jesus wept over Jerusalem. They were sheep without a shepherd, they were going astray. And what I think Jesus is saying here is that there is a true blessedness that we need to look for, to seek for, to trust God for, so that we will see ourselves as we really are, but that we won't despair in that knowledge, but that we will come and be the people who are truly blessed, as we trust in him for forgiveness, for peace, for joy, for love, and as we seek to live out in our lives from day to day.

So that we see the world through his eyes. So we see each other through his eyes. They will be comforted.

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. There are wonderful blessings, not just for the future and these promises, but in the here and now. We'll follow this through next week a little bit, just in closing.

- [19 : 28] Jesus says, blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. what is it?

To be meek? What is it that Jesus is bringing these people to as he shares these truths with them? He wants them to have people who are meek.

That doesn't mean to say that they're going to be walked over, that doesn't mean to say they're going to be downtrodden, doesn't mean to say that they're just going to be nothing and nobody's.

They're going to be a people like him, people like Jesus. Be attitudes.

What our attitudes should be. made In Philippians chapter 2, and with this I finish, verse 5, your attitude, my attitude, should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

- [20 : 49] Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing.

Taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, and being found in appearances of man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on the cross.

Therefore God exalted into the highest place and gave him a name that is above every name, that on the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and the glory of God the Father.

Your attitude should be the same as not of Christ Jesus, who was me, who was gentle, who was kind, who was loving.

Who, when he saw injustice, was hungry. But always demonstrated that humble, loving acts of service in the world to which he came.

[22 : 06] Our attitude should be the same as his. Do we dream? Do we long?

Do we long? This world that God has created, where man has been made in his own image, in his own likeness, and that image has been marred and scarred and torn apart.

Do we dream? Do we long? Do we know that in Jesus' name, we can come like him to this world with our sorrow, with our tears, with our pleadings to the God who can make it with us?

May God bless his word to us. We'll just bow for a moment. Lord we thank you for your word Lord it's difficult for us to understand everything that you're saying to us Lord maybe we just feel that we are nothing and not poor in spirit we feel maybe just feeling it in the wrong way because we think we're nothing and can do nothing and Lord that's not true because with your help, with your grace, with your strength with Jesus in our hearts and in our lives we can be people who are in this dark world the light that Jesus wants to shine we can be that soul that will bring savor back into the lives of those whose lives are tasteless and empty and dark so help us Lord to be like Jesus help us to be a people who feel the pain of the lostness and the emptiness in this world as Jesus feels it help us Lord to see things as you see them tenderize our hearts Lord to be sensitive to all that you want to say to us to do in us and through us

Lord we thank you for your word and ask for your blessing on it Lord and your blessing on each one of us as we seek to live out your word in our lives for day to day for Jesus sake Amen I want to sing up a psalm a psalm psalm 80 and I had a wee discussion with Eddie at the start and he couldn't figure a tune for it and I was starting to panic that I might have to do it myself but thankfully James McDonald who works in Blysewood James comes to church from time to time when he's still in Invergordon and James has agreed to lead it for us but as I just before we sing it when I started preparing for today

[25 : 53] I started off thinking about fruit the fruit of the spirit I was going to speak on being fruit and God's vineyard and then I got diverted hopefully by God but I want to sing this psalm that has been on my mind all the time and it speaks of the vineyard that God's people were down through the generations and if you take time to read about the vineyard in the Old Testament in particular you see that this vineyard never really was what it was supposed to be just just kept getting it wrong it was a vineyard that was just not producing the fruit that it should have done the psalmist wrote this psalm a vineyard that the Lord had planted and just how he longed for it to bear fruit and this final verse pleads with God to turn to them again and just to shine shine on them so we'll sing this song together but just as I was thinking of the vineyard in past then

I was thinking that Jesus himself says that he's the vine we're the branches these branches are to bear fruit and sometimes branches need pruning and all the different things that go with it isn't it wonderful that he's the vine so there's no problem with the vine and we can be the people who bear fruit in this world just as we've been thinking that would be such a blessing refreshing for this work which we love you