

Sermon: A Beatitude Attitude... (sermon notes from Morning Service 8.3.2015)

Anyone remember Monty Python – Blessed are the Cheesemakers? ☺

Second week in series Matthew's Messiah – the Jesus we see in Matthew's gospel and today our title is "Matthew's Messiah has a life changing message."

Sermon in Mount commonly quoted (Gandhi, Marx, Tolstoy and Luther King) standard for ethical teaching – but more than that!

Most people are willing to take the Sermon on the Mount as a flag to sail under, but few will use it as a rudder by which to steer.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Jesus gather disciples around him. This is discipleship sermon. It's not about how to get *into* the kingdom of heaven. Rather it's about how to act as citizens *of* this kingdom. This is Jesus' discipleship manifesto about what it means to be a follower of Jesus and how to live in the Kingdom of God. He calls his disciples and us to unflinching discipleship, a discipleship that is counter cultural, life transforming, a life that makes a difference. Can you describe your life as that? That's the challenge.

We've come to know this sermon as the Beatitudes, "beautiful attitudes" as Billy Graham calls them. So the question I want you to be thinking about as we look at this life transforming passage – is have you got a beatitude attitude.... ?

Called to live by very different standards than the world around us.

Humility-

What would it look like for your life to be marked by humility?

Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus begins here because this is the key attitude which is required of all those who want to enter God's kingdom. It's an attitude which says: "I am a ratbag. I need to fling myself on the mercy of God. I am a spiritual nobody, I don't deserve God's kindness."

It's the kind of beatitude attitude we find in the hymn Amazing Grace...

**Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.**

John Newton acknowledged that he was that ratbag, that sinner in need of saving. He knew honestly who He was and where the answer was found. Total dependence on God. Blessed are the poor in spirit, says Jesus, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Mourn:

And that links to our next beatitude attitude: "Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted."

Remember this is a passage about discipleship. About mourning our sins. The more we appreciate the depths to which we have fallen, the more we will appreciate the heights to which God has raised us.

Jesus reminds us that we need to recapture a healthy mourning over our sin. So why not get praying that God would show us who we are, so that He may change us, comfort and challenge us. Because the point is simple. If you don't think you have sinned greatly, then you won't realise you've been forgiven much. For those who mourn, says Jesus, there is great comfort. They weep real tears but find real joy.

Meek:

And then coupled to the poor in spirit and the mourners, are the meek in verse 5: "Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth."

Meekness is not sold to us as an attractive attribute in our world. Interestingly there are only two people are called meek in the Bible. One is Moses in Numbers 12 and the other is Jesus in Matthew 11. Both were clear headed, both were leaders.. But they did not push themselves ahead of others or push others aside to further their own interests. So meekness is the willingness to put others' interests above your own. It's the willingness to deal with criticism graciously, whereas often our first reaction is to defend ourselves and give as good as we get.

Hungry:

Verse 6: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." How hungry are you... how hungry for righteousness... It's hunger for the things of God and godly living...are you different? God has so much more for us. Hunger for more, don't be content with what you know now....For the more you grow, then more you know you need to grow. And that desire, says Jesus, will be satisfied.

Mercy:

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." Jesus says the mark of the follower of Jesus is someone who is merciful to others, not condemning but forgiving. It's the attitude that builds people up and not breaks them down

Forgiving others is a mark of what it looks like to be a Christian. Unforgiveness is a barrier to being used by God.

Purity

And Jesus says: Blessed are the pure in heart. For they shall see God. What's your heart like at the moment? It's a challenge from Jesus to have a heart which is pure in motive and thought and action.

Peacemakers:

And purity is also seen in our dealing with others in verse 9: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons and daughters of God." Another mark of the Christian is the one who makes peace. Are you a peacemaker in your life? Is that one of your beatitude attitudes

Persecuted:

"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are *you* when people insult *you*, persecute *you* and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Great, I hear you say! The fact is, says Jesus, that if you do verses 3-9, then verses 10-12 will happen to you. In other words, if you follow Christ wholeheartedly, putting into practice the counter cultural teaching of the beatitudes, living the way of the kingdom of God, then you will be hated for it