

Blessed!

A Study on the *Beatitudes* of Jesus

As of 6/28/20

Part 9 The Exposition of Matthew 5:4- continued

Matthew 5:1-12

1 When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

2 He opened His mouth and *began* to teach them, saying,

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

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The Blessedness of Persecution

Matthew 5:10-12

10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Now of all the Beatitudes, this last one seems the most contrary to human thinking and experience. The world does not associate "Blessedness" with Humility; or Mourning over Sin; or Gentleness; or Righteousness; or Mercy, or Purity of Heart; or Peacemaking Holiness. But it certainly does NOT associate being blessed by God with

Persecution.

Several years ago a popular national magazine took a survey to determine the things that make people Happy And, according to the responses they received, “happy people” enjoyed other people- but were NOT Self-sacrificing; they refused to participate in any negative feelings or emotions about themselves; and they had a very high “Sense of Accomplishment” based on their own Self-sufficiency.

The person described by those Principles is completely contrary to the kind of person the Lord says will be authentically Happy Jesus says a “blessed” person is NOT one who is “Self-sufficient” but one who recognizes his own Emptiness and Need; a person, who comes to God as a Beggar, knowing he has no Resources in himself. He is NOT confident in his own ability- but is very much aware of his own Inability. Such a person, Jesus says, is NOT at all “positive” about himself but mourns over his own Sinfulness and isolation from a holy God.

Jesus and the Bible teaches that, to be genuinely Content- a person must NOT be Self-serving but Self-sacrificing. He must be Gentle; Merciful; Pure in Heart; Yearn for Righteousness; and must seek to make Peace on God's Terms- even if those Attitudes cause him to suffer.

The Lord's opening thrust in the Sermon on the Mount climaxes with this great and sobering Truth: those who faithfully live according to the first seven Beatitudes are guaranteed at some point to experience the eighth. Those who live Righteously will inevitably be persecuted for it. Godliness generates Hostility and Antagonism from those in the world. So, the crowning Feature of the happy person is Persecution! Kingdom people are *rejected* people. Holy people are singularly **blessed**, but they pay a price for it.

The last Beatitude is really two in one, a single Beatitude repeated and expanded. The word, “**Blessed**” is mentioned twice (vv. 10, 11), but only one characteristic (**persecuted**) is given, although it is mentioned three times, and only one result (**for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**) is promised. So, the word, “**Blessed**” is repeated to emphasize the generous Blessing given by God to those who are persecuted. “*Double-blessed are those who are persecuted,*” Jesus seems to be saying.

Now there are three distinct Aspects of “Kingdom Faithfulness” that are spoken of in this Beatitude:

- The Persecution
- The Promise
- The Position

The Persecution

“**Those who have been persecuted**” are the citizens of the Kingdom: those who live out the previous seven Beatitudes. And, to the degree that they fulfill the first seven- they may experience the eighth.

2Timothy 3:10-17

10 Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance,

11 persecutions, *and* sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium *and* at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!

12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

13 But evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*,

15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Persecution is a Mystery

One of the greatest Mysteries in all the Bible is the Issue of Persecution- which is but one manifestation of the greater Issue of Suffering. Other manifestations of Suffering that the Bible speaks about include:

- **Trials** (*peirasmós* Strong's #3986) An experiment; attempt; trial; proving
- **Tests** (*peirazō*; Strong's #3985) To try whether a thing can be done; to determine one's faith; virtue; or character
- **Afflictions** (Hebrew *ra*; Strong's #7451) an evil; a distress; injury; calamity
- **Tumults** (*akatastasia*; Strong's #181) instability; a state of disorder; a disturbance; or confusion

1Peter 1:6-9

6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

John 6:6

This He was saying to test him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.

Psalms 34:19

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all.

2Corinthians 6:4-10

4 but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses,

5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,

6 in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love,

7 in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,

8 by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; *regarded* as deceivers and yet true;

9 as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death,

10 as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

Many people ask, *“Why is it God’s Will for His Own children to suffer? If God is “Good” and if God is all Powerful (Omnipotent), why doesn’t He prevent Suffering from touching those He loves and saved?”* Or, *“Why would it be God’s Will to allow Suffering to come to His Own?”* What Purpose does it serve for God to allow Suffering to come to His children?

Sadly, many have sought to answer this Mystery by *manufacturing* a false doctrine that says, *“God doesn’t do this- satan does.”* But, in their effort to solve the Mystery, they have attacked and diminished the Doctrine of God’s absolute Sovereignty.

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