

The Blessed Heart - pt 1
Matthew 5:2-11

To properly understand the Beatitudes we must realize that Jesus is not *primarily* giving His disciples a list of behaviors that they should strive for in order to receive blessings in their lives. (This is a common approach to the study of the Beatitudes.) All too often we think that we can change ourselves - this is really a *control issue* that we haven't dealt with yet.

Jesus is listing heart characteristics that are *produced by God* within the human heart that is submitted to Jesus' Kingly reign in their lives. Remember Jesus' 3-part call to His disciples in Matthew 4:19, 1/ "Come" (come out of) 2/ "follow me" (come into me) and 3/ "I will make you fishers of men" (and I will change you)?

The heart that is blessed is the heart that is surrendered completely to Jesus. Have you totally surrendered everything to God? Are there still areas of control where you think you can change yourself?

The Blessed Heart - pt 2
Matthew 5:2-11

The Beatitudes represent a surrendered life. In other words, when I truly deal with my 'control' issues and totally surrender to Jesus Christ, He then begins to produce in me the qualities that are defined in the Beatitudes. And as He does so He pronounces me *blessed*.

As this begins to happen in my life, the blessings of heaven also begin to be released in my life. I am blessed precisely because I am God's alone and He is reproducing in me the qualities of His Son, Jesus. I am becoming to God the *aroma of Christ* (2 Corinthians 2:15).

The act of surrender (releasing our control issues) is at the heart of discipleship to Jesus (Matthew 19:16-30). Is God speaking to you about releasing to Him things that you still try to control?

The Blessed Heart - pt 3
Matthew 5:2-11

The Beatitudes represent a kingdom view of life. A kingdom mindset. They point to a *blessedness*, a *happiness*, which is not dependent upon outward circumstances.

I wonder how often in our lives we miss God's blessing because of our external circumstances. Studying the Beatitudes we are instructed that the blessing of the kingdom of heaven is not negatively impacted by external circumstances.

If this is true, then why do I struggle so feeling blessed when things in my life seem to "go south?" Could it be that I have not learned this very basic lesson that Jesus taught His disciples. This was the first recorded teaching of Jesus. *When you feel the most empty - you are the most blessed!* Only when I am the most empty am I able to be the most filled - with God! Think about it!

The Blessed Heart - pt 4

Matthew 5:2-11

The **sequential nature** of the Beatitudes can be easily overlooked. But the King (Jesus) is presenting a view of kingdom life: this is how both men & women of the kingdom of God are to live.

If I am going to be a kingdom man or woman there first must be room for the kingdom within me. I must be empty, *poor in spirit*. Only after I am empty of self am I able to truly *mourn* over the loss of humanity's innocence - my personal sin and our corporate rejection of God.

When I am *empty* and *grieving* over sin, *meekness* is the next heart quality of the kingdom to develop within me. This happens as the kingdom of self-rule is replaced by the rule or government of the King. As I become *submissive* to the King, *obedient* to Him - I become *meek* or *yielding* to His rule. Now when this happens I begin to desire His rule within more & more - and I become *hungry* & *thirsty for righteousness*.

Oh the wisdom of our God!