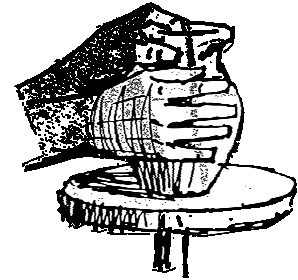


His Workmanship Westside

*"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10*



Vol. XXIII

June 29, 2014

No. 26

Isaiah 64:8

The Beatitudes and the Gospel of the Kingdom, by John Piper

We begin today a series on the Beatitudes of Mt 5:3-12. To introduce them, we focus on the Beatitudes as a whole in the wider context of Christ's ministry. What are these Beatitudes? Do they spell out conditions we must meet in order to inherit eternal life? Do they celebrate the power of God in the life of the disciples?

The Structure of Matthew. Notice the summary statement of Jesus's earthly ministry: *"And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people,"* Mt 4:23. Jesus made it his mission to preach the coming of the kingdom, teach the way of the kingdom, and demonstrate the purpose and power of the kingdom by healing the sick. Preaching, teaching, and healing. Almost verbatim we find the same summary in Mt 9:35: *"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity."*

When we look to see what is sandwiched between these two summary descriptions of Christ's ministry, what we see are two major sections: chapters 5-7 are a collection of Jesus's teaching called the Sermon on the

Mount; and chapters 8-9 are a collection of accounts of his healing ministry. So Mt 5-9 appear to be a five-chapter unit designed by Matthew to present us (1) with typical teaching of the Lord concerning the way of the kingdom, and (2) with typical healings and miracles to demonstrate the power of the kingdom. The value of seeing this is that it warns us against treating any little piece of this section in isolation. Matthew put his material together in a particular way. He is the inspired apostle, and we should care about how he chose to put his material together. That was the way he transmitted his meaning.

The Jesus Who Teaches and Heals. For example, we cannot separate the Man Who taught the Sermon on the Mount from the One Who cleansed the leper and healed the centurion's servant. It is arbitrary for modernists to say that they admire the ethical teacher of the Sermon on the Mount but they don't want to get involved with the spooky supernatural Person Who calms storms and casts out demons. Nor can we have the Jesus Who heals without the Jesus Who teaches. Some have a charismatic fascination with the miracles of Jesus, but when it comes to reckoning

with the One Who said, "Don't call your brother a fool, don't lust, don't get divorced, don't swear, don't return evil for evil, love your enemy"—well, they like the Miracle Worker Who heals their diseases, but they are not so interested in this Radical Intruder into their personal lifestyle. Matthew's point was that the Lord Who teaches in the Sermon on the Mount is the same Lord Who calls us to follow Him through life and depend upon His power. His personal work and power are inseparable from His teaching. In fact, we will see right away that this is clear even in the Beatitudes.

Crowds and Disciples. *"Seeing the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to him. And He opened his mouth and taught them saying....,"* Mt 5:1. The hearers might have been gathered in two concentric circles: the inner circle of the disciples, and the outer circle of the "crowds." Verse 5 says He taught His disciples. But Mt 7:28 says, *"And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as One Who had authority, and not as their scribes."* The crowds were listening—Jesus wanted them to listen even though the sermon was

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**“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.”
—Matthew 4:23**

primarily addressed to disciples. In like manner our Sunday worship at Westside is conceived—the word is prepared primarily to feed, strengthen, inspire the worship and life of God's people. But we pray that the curious, the onlookers, the skeptical, the searchers, the doubters will come to Westside the way the crowds gathered in behind the disciples on the mount. We believe that the Spirit-filled, authoritative preaching of the Word of God has a peculiar power to awaken unbelievers to the truth and beauty of Christ—even when it is addressed primarily to disciples. It is precisely the things our Lord has to say to disciples that can awaken desire in others to come to Christ.

Eight Beatitudes, One Unit. The Lord began by pronouncing a certain kind of person blessed. We call these blessings “beatitudes,” the Latin word for happiness or blessedness. There are eight Beatitudes worded the same way. The last one says, *“Blessed are you when men revile you,”* v. 11. It could be viewed as a ninth one, but it is really an expansion of v. 10 and is worded differently from the others. None of the others say, *“Blessed are you.”* It is probably an expansion of v. 10, which says, *“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.”* Verse 11 gives specific instances of the persecution in v. 10.

The eight beatitudes of vs. 3–10 are a unit when you look at the first and the eighth. The promise of the first beatitude is the same as the last: *“for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,”* vs. 3, 8. The other six beatitudes sandwiched between these two are all different. *“...for they shall be comforted,”* v. 4; *“...for they shall inherit the earth,”* v. 5; *“...for they shall be satisfied,”* v. 6; *“...for they shall*

obtain mercy,” v. 7; *“...for they shall see God,”* v. 8; *“...for they shall be called the sons of God,”* v. 9. All these are promises for the future. But the promise of the first and last beatitude in vs. 3 and 10 seems to relate to the present: the disciples are assured that *“theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* So what is the meaning of this pattern? There are at least two implications.

Blessings of the Kingdom. First, by sandwiching six promises in between two assurances that such people have the kingdom of heaven, Jesus meant to tell us that these six promises are blessings of the kingdom. In other words, these six things are what you can count on when you are a part of God's kingdom. This is what the kingdom brings: comfort, earth inheritance, satisfied righteousness, mercy, a vision of God, and the awesome title of son of God. You don't have to pick and choose among these promises. They all belong to the kingdom. That is the first implication in the fact that Jesus began and ended with the assurance, *“Theirs is the kingdom of heaven,”* with six promises between.

A Present yet Future Kingdom. The other implication of this pattern comes from the fact that the first and last assurances are present tense, and the six in the middle are future. This was Jesus's way of saying that the kingdom of heaven is present with the disciples now (*“Theirs is the kingdom of heaven”*), but that the full blessings of the kingdom will have to wait for the age to come (*“They shall inherit the earth”*). Jesus has brought the kingdom of heaven to earth in His own kingly power and fellowship, and we can enjoy it here and now; but the full experience of life of the kingdom will have to wait for the age to come. We

can see exactly what this means right here in the beatitudes.

Being Comforted. Those who mourn will one day be comforted, v. 4. *“God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more,”* Rev 21:4. But see vs. 11-12: *“Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.”* In other words, even though the final reward of comfort is kept for us in heaven, we can now rejoice even in the midst of suffering. Isn't this joy a foretaste of the promised comfort? There is no joy without some element of comfort.

Obtaining Mercy. The merciful shall obtain mercy, v. 7. But in the parable of the unforgiving servant the king says to the wicked servant, *“And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?”* Mt 18:23-35. In other words, Jesus taught that we do not merely wait for the age to come to receive mercy. It has already come in Jesus. We taste it here and now in forgiveness of sins and innumerable blessings of this life.

Called Sons of God. The peacemakers *“shall be called sons of God,”* v. 9. When we are baptized, we become sons of God, Gal 3:26-29. Yet Paul said, *“We groan inwardly as we wait for the adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies,”* Rm 8:23. Thus the full benefits of being sons of God await the resurrection. But only seconds after speaking the beatitudes, Jesus said, *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in heaven,”* Mt 5:16. God is already our Father! We are already sons! We have

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Psalm 133:1

Let your faith be seen in 2014
“I rejoice to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.”
—Colossians 2:5

Beatitudes, from p. 2

a foretaste of sonship now. The point of these three examples is that the kingdom of heaven is both present and future. We have foretastes of the reign of God now, but we will experience vastly more in the future. This is why vs. 3 and 10 assure us that “theirs is the kingdom of heaven,” but vs. 4-9 promise that the kingdom blessings are still in the future. It is both.

Seeing the Beatitudes for What They Are. Unless you see the Beatitudes as kingdom teaching, you will not be able to understand them for what they are. They are an announcement of how blessed people are who already possess the power of the kingdom. You might say: “Blessed! Happy are you who have the kingdom power at work within you, for you will inherit the kingdom with all its infinite pleasures forever and ever. Rejoice, my beloved disciples, for it is the reign of God in your life.” The Beatitudes an-
nounce that citizens of the kingdom are blessed. But that’s not all. The Beatitudes also invite sinners to become this kind of person. How should the crowds have heard the words? What did the words mean for them? The Beatitudes are invitation to the crowds—the people who come to worship out of tradition or curiosity or skepticism. Don’t these words of promise beckon them to become righteous or merciful or pure?

What Are They for You? Next week we begin with the best news a hopeless sinner could ever hear. What could be easier than having an empty hand?— unless you are clutching a \$1,000 bill or a personal “bill of rights.”

Discipleship Here At Home

Tolerance to Compromise, from p. 4

Disoriented drowning victims actually fight the person trying to save them. We can certainly see how young Christians may actually fight against the scriptural stance on sin. We live in an ocean of immorality, harmful trends, and flawed ideologies. Sadly, many Christians are sinking fast without realizing it. *Tolerance* and *love* are two very different concepts—a truth we all must grasp. We are called to love in the name of Jesus, but we are not called to ignore or accept debauchery in the name of diversity. We must show compassion to the lost without sanctioning their depravity.

The media is selling us and our children the idea that denouncing a sinful lifestyle is somehow showing hatred for the individual. Christians, along with the rest of society, have largely been bamboozled regarding homosexuality. Although there is no biological support for the notion, the media tells us that people are “born gay”—and most people now believe it. Of course, no one is born engaging in sexual activity of any kind, and people are not born gay. When confrontation against sin is handled appropriately, denouncing homosexuality is actually love. Instead of speaking up for Christ, we are largely keeping quiet at a time when we ought to be saying, “*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter,*” Is 5:20. We should be affirming unapologetically, “*Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people,*” Pr 14:34. The prophet Nathan related a story to David, and when the story engaged David’s interest, Nathan then condemned his sin. The whole event was appropriate and effective in condemning the sin in David’s life, 2 Samuel 12. Stand against sin and do your best to save sinners from a life of sin.

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

- Pat Wilkes**—recovering from parathyroid surgery
- Larry Campbell**—recovering from concussion
- Mark Campbell**—recovering from seizure
- Sarah Hadders**—broken foot
- Ed Fink**—prostate cancer; current treatment for brain tumors
- Giles Free**—seizure last month; confined at home
- Sue Witherington, Brett’s grandmother**—breast cancer has returned
- Shirley Barrett, Rod Green’s mother**—home from hospital for respiratory ailments
- Nick Krausert, Szymanskis’ friend**—passed away last week; pray for Nick’s wife Linda and their family
- Rhonda Love, friend of Judy Strand**—terminal cancer; young mother studying with Jim & Vicki
- Gregg Geis’s friend Becky** in CA—terminal cancer; searching for the truth
- CHRONIC CONDITIONS**
- Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr; Addison Tope; Christian Harrod; Pat Wilkes**—asthma
- Bill Dennis**—heart issues
- Autumn Hadders**—epilepsy; celiac disease
- Danielle Huelsman**—vertigo, CV syndrome
- Kirk Johnson**—worsening MS; needs quick meals to heat up, like soup
- Menards**—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak;
- Virginia**, macular degeneration; high BP
- Sandra Perry**—neuropathy from diabetes
- Cheryl Reames**—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia
- Nell Free**—pacemaker, heart; back pain
- Judy Sartin**—spinal stenosis; arthritis
- Judy and Mike Strand**—both beginning treatment for hepatitis
- Lynda Szymanski**—COPD, lung weakness

Job concerns Linda Szymanski

Travel **Mina Gonzalez** is in Tucson for her parents’ 60th wedding anniversary until Mon. The **Maillouxes** are out of town through 7/14. **Kim and DeWayne Howell** and **Kaysha Witherington** are in KY until Mon. The **Gintchins** are in Bulgaria.



Exposing current thoughts & trends

When Tolerance Turns to Compromise, *anonymous*

In our politically correct world, we are constantly bombarded with propaganda which promotes the tolerance of "alternative" lifestyles. It is not improbable to hear religious teens saying, "We should stop scolding homosexuals because we are creating homophobia. I love and respect all my homosexual friends who are open about their sexual preference." Perhaps we have even met religious people who are so bold as to say, "Being a homosexual does not make them different in a bad way or bad people. I think we need to keep an open mind and respect other's preferences and style and even learn a little from them."

Frequently, the world tells Christians who take a stand on immorality that the Bible proclaims we are to "love our neighbor and not judge people." We cannot deceive ourselves by thinking, "It's not our place to judge," see Jn 7:24; Mt 7:1-5. We are duty-bound to spread the truth about what God condemns and to encourage repentance, Ezek 3:17ff; 2 Cor 5:11. "You who love the LORD, hate evil!" Ps 97:10; cf. Pr 8:13; Am 5:15. Tolerance of sin leads to compromise on actions condemned by God. Respect of others and embracing of others are virtues that create racial harmony and enable men and women to appreciate each other's uniqueness. But this virtue can become a liability for young people who are unable to distinguish between diversity and perversity.

As with all answers in life, we must consult the scriptures as the infallible guide. "Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared," Ex 23:20. We must not let the culture be our guide. Bible students will realize that judgment has already been passed on those who persist in immorality. When preaching is done on various moral issues, it is not the preacher who proclaims judgment, it is the word of God. The same Bible that promises eternal life promises judgment. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rm 6:23.

What will rescue people in sin is not tolerance, it is Jesus Christ. By speaking His gospel to people in sin (whatever sin that may be), we can help them avoid the punishment of everlasting condemnation. We must speak the truth in love, and that demonstrates real love, Eph 4:15. That is how Jesus dealt with the woman caught in adultery, Jn 8:1-11. He did not say, "It is okay that you are in sin. It is just an alternate lifestyle." He said, "Go and sin no more." Many young people ignore God's desire to confront sin in love. They instead pride themselves on being "tolerant," "loving," and "respectful" of immorality. This lack of discernment is a slippery slope—how far from respecting sin to experimenting with it?

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Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 246-8810
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

info@thechurchingolden.com

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning adult Bible class,
Inside Out, Growing a Spirit of Service,
Lesson 11, "A Unified Spirit," Jeff Wilkes

Wednesday night adult Bible class, July,
The Holy Spirit, Jim Reingrover