

Three cheers for a poor self-image.

Matthew 5:1-6

Introduction

1. Who would you want to build a church with?

Jesus shocked his followers when he called sinners to come forward. He did not ask for the confident, joyful, assertive, and content but rather he pronounced blessing on the defeated, sad, unassertive, and frustrated.

2. Dr. Hadden Robinson addressing an audience of young pastors opened his remarks with “*Jesus is not looking for common sinners, he is looking for dirty, rotten, reprobates.*” The point being, if we are to embrace and preach the cross with passion, we must have a deep sense of our own moral depravity and desperate need for God’s grace.

3. Why do some people “get it” (the idea that redemption through the cross is necessary) while others do not?

1 Cor.1:18 “For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

4. Jesus’ ministry targeted people who were sensitive to their need for righteousness.

Matt.9 “¹⁰ And it happened that as He was reclining {at the table} in the house, behold many tax-gatherers and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. ¹¹ And when the Pharisees saw {this,} they said to His disciples, ‘Why is your Teacher eating with the tax-gatherers and sinners?’ ¹² But when He heard this, He said, ‘**{It is} not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.** ¹³ But go and learn what {this} means, ‘*I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,*’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’”

Luke 18:9-14 “And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: .. Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. .. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, ‘God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. .. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’ .. But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’ .. **I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.”**

5. The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus’ exposition of the Law and its desired effect on those who will be confronted with the redemptive Lamb. In this sermon Jesus is confronting the sin of pride (the pride of moral discipline), which has no appetite for the cross. This was the temptation of Eve, Israel,

Jesus in the wilderness, and Jesus in the garden. It is also our great temptation.

Chapter 5 tells us about the moral standards of the Kingdom and the brokenness that the moral law (rightly understood) will produce in God's people drawing them to their King Redeemer.

A. Outline

The Messiah defines the true nature of Kingdom life: The sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29)

The character of Kingdom people (5:1-12)

The purpose of the captivity of Israel leading up to the coming of Messiah was brokenness of spirit, humility, and willingness to receive the love of God through the Messianic mission. The beatitudes summarize the kind of heart that will inherit the blessings of the Kingdom age. The word BEATITUDE comes from the Latin word for "blessing" meaning "to be congratulated".

In a real sense, what follows is a description of Jesus.

Attitude toward self: They hunger for holiness (5:1-6)

"1 And when He saw the multitudes, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2 And opening His mouth He {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 meek, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

B. The Pharisee version of Matt.5:3-6

- “3 Blessed are the **confident**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 Blessed are the **fortunate**, for they shall be comfortable.
- 5 Blessed are the **assertive**, for they shall inherit the earth.
- 6 Blessed are the **holy**, for they shall be rewarded.”

C. The purpose of the Law is to expose human need for a Redeemer.

1. “And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,” **Rom.5:20**
“therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.” **Gal.3:24**
2. The Law is a tutor in three ways.

<i>The Law reveals our sin</i>	<i>The Law reveals Christ as sinless</i>	<i>The Law reveals the meaning of the Cross</i>
The law produces pain, shame, &	The Law authenticates Christ as a worthy	The Law's demands for punishment of sin are fully

longing for Christ.	sacrifice.	satisfied.
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- a. It reveals God's holy character and as such is a guide for all who bear His image.
 - b. It reveals man's sinfulness. (Rom.3:20, 5:20, 7:7,12,13)
 - c. It is a minister of death and bondage. (Gal.4:3,9; II Cor.3:6,7,9; Rom.7:5)
 - d. It prepares men for the gospel. (Gal.3:24)
 - e. It foreshadowed things to come. (Heb.8:5, 9:23, 10:1; Col.2:17)
3. The poverty of Spirit is the theme of the other conditions in these verses and it identifies Old Covenant disciples who are ready for the Messiah Redeemer.
4. The problem of sin is universal but it is not universally recognized therefore the Law comes to expose our need.

Rom.3 “¹⁰as it is written, “*There is none righteous, not even one; 11 There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; 12 All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one.””*

- 5. Moral pride leads to a depreciation of the Cross and an inflated concept of the self.
- 6. At the heart of sin is pride of our moral discipline. Jas.4:6; 1 Pet.5:5 Pride is seen in Christian **Triumphalism** which characterizes much of the Evangelical culture.

- a. Triumphalism is a posture (associated with many conservative Christians) that says:
 - What I do is (assumed uncritically to be) God's will and work (fully).
 - My perceptions are God's perceptions (exactly).
 - My motives are not mixed but pure.
 - All who question or oppose me are obstructing the work of God and are evil.
 - I have no room for reflective self-critical analysis of anything other than how I can be more effective in furthering my causes.
 - I have answers - not questions, certainty – not doubts, mandates – not options, declarations – not dialogue.
 - I punctuate all of my statements with exclamation marks not commas, or question marks.
- b. In reality this posture is:
 - Arrogant
 - Insensitive

- Mean spirited
 - Abusive
 - Angry
 - Foolish
 - Embarrassing
- c. But before we marginalize many of those who take a “triumphalist” posture we need to try to see through their cultural B.O. and B.S. and hear what might be some rather profound challenges. Consider the following questions that are raised by many triumphalists.
- Is there meaning to life and death?
 - Is there meaningful public truth in the realm of moral values? Or is there a strict division between science (universal truth) and values (private preferences).
 - Can we dismiss the Scriptural story through historical critical “scholarship” so easily?
 - Are conservative fundamentalists the only people in the cultures war that are: closed-minded, heard hearted, uninformed, and bull headed?
 - What does it mean to be human?
 - Is the only source of public truth that which comes from naturalistic (materialistic) science? This assumes that there is no external authority to nature.
- d. The need for a liberal learning style.
1. It is possible to be conservative in one’s conclusions while at the same time being liberal (open, reasonable) in one’s learning style.
 2. Classic liberalism (openness, reasonableness) need not be synonymous with culturally liberal moral and political conclusions.
 3. Classic fundamentalism (affirming the tenants of the historic Christian faith) need not to be synonymous with cultural fundamentalism which is uncritical, anti-intellectual, angry, arrogant, narrow minded, mean spirited, and foolish.

D. Conclusion

1. What is Jesus looking for?
 - Not confidence in self but poverty of spirit
 - Not joyful satisfaction but mourning for a fallen creation
 - Not self assertiveness but meekness
 - Not a life of moral pride and discipline but a hunger for holiness.
2. Lessons

- There is a happiness that comes from being blind to our neediness but it is not of the Kingdom.
- Pride of moral discipline is the greatest threat to our souls.
- The life of the Kingdom is on the “far side” of a realization of the depth of our depravity. 2 Cor.12:9-10, Rom.7:23-8:4