

What Jesus Has to Say About...

“What Jesus Has to Say About Happiness”

Matthew 5:1-16 – January 10, 2010

Sermon Series on Matthew

WHAT JESUS HAS TO SAY ABOUT...		
A 7-Week Series on the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5-7		
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Jan 10	What Jesus Has to Say About Happiness	5:1-16
Jan 17	What Jesus Has to Say About Anger	5:17-26
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Some Notes About Today's Bible Passage

- Today we begin to study the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) – a message that many believe to be the greatest sermon ever preached.
- The theme of Matthew is “Jesus is King,” and so this is the King’s inaugural address explaining what He expects from members of His Kingdom. This sermon does not so much present the way of salvation (i.e. how to get to heaven) but rather the way of right living for those who are in God’s family.
- It has interesting parallels with the Old Testament Law:

Old Testament Law	NT Sermon on the Mount
Given to Moses by God on a mountain (Exodus 19:3)	Given to us by Jesus on a mountainside (Matthew 5:1)
Contained in 5 books known as the Torah or Pentateuch	The first of 5 major speeches Jesus gives in Matthew (5-7, 10, 13, 18-20, 24-25)

- Specifically, the first part of today’s passage (Matthew 5:3-12) is known as the Beatitudes (Latin *beatus* meaning “blessed, happy”).
- The word “blessed” (*makarios*) literally means “happy, fortunate, free from daily cares and worries, ultimate well being and distinctive spiritual joy.” Thus, Jesus is describing how to have true happiness.

What Jesus Has to Say About Happiness (Matthew 5:1-16)

1. True happiness comes from a right relationship with God (5:3-6)

- The first four beatitudes have to do with our vertical relationship with God (vv.3-6):

- “poor in spirit” (v.3) means dependent on God – to recognize your need of God’s help; this is the opposite of self-sufficiency; it means to acknowledge your spiritual poverty and to declare spiritual bankruptcy before God
- “mourn” (v.4) means to grieve over your sins and the sins of your community; this is the sorrow of repentance
- “meek” (v.5) means gentle, humble, considerate, courteous; humble before God; a true view of oneself; patient submissiveness to offense
- “hunger and thirst after righteousness” (v.6) means passionate pursuit of the things of God (versus things of the world); a spiritual longing to be right with God, right in living, and to right the wrongs of injustice.

- Jesus says that the people who have these qualities have true happiness (“blessed”). Specifically, Jesus promises that...
 - declaring spiritual bankruptcy gets you into God’s kingdom (v.3)
 - grieving over your sins gets you true comfort through forgiveness of your sins (v.4)
 - humbling and submitting yourself gets you ultimate victory and reward (v.5)
 - passionately pursuing the things of God fills you up like nothing else can or will (v.6).
- Application #1 – God, I want to be truly happy through having a right relationship with You. Therefore...
 - I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable. I am spiritually bankrupt.
 - I admit that I have sinned against You and the people in my life. I am deeply sorry for my sins, God, and I ask for Your forgiveness through Your Son Jesus Christ.
 - I submit my life to You and ask You to lead me. You lead, and I will follow.
 - I purpose to pursue You and Your ways first above everything else. I purpose to be a God-chaser with Your help and power.

2. True happiness comes from a right relationship with other people (5:7-12)

- The last four beatitudes have to do with our horizontal relationships with other people (vv.7-12):
 - “the merciful” (v.7) are those who extend mercy to others; those who forgive and pardon those who have hurt and insulted and offended them
 - “the pure in heart” (v.8) live a sincere, honest, and transparent life before others; this is the opposite of hypocrisy and falsehood

- (3) “the peacemakers” (v.9) promote peace with others, seek reconciliation in relationships, and pursue unity within God’s boundaries
- (4) “those who are persecuted because of righteousness” (vv.10-12) are those who are wrongly treated because of their faith in Christ; this persecution includes insults, false accusations, and sometimes physical hurt or even death.
- Jesus says that the people who have these qualities have true happiness (“blessed”). Specifically, Jesus promises that...
 - (1) Those who forgive others will be forgiven themselves (v.7).
 - (2) Those who are sincere, honest, and take off their masks will have a closer intimacy with God (v.8).
 - (3) Those who promote peace will show their true identity as a child of God and so be labeled (v.9).
 - (4) Those who are persecuted for their faith will receive great rewards in the next life (vv.10-12).
- Application #2 – With God’s help and power by His Spirit, I am going to pursue true happiness in my relationships by...
 - Forgiving so-n-so for what they did to me.
 - Taking off my masks and truly risk showing myself to those around me. Specifically, I am going to take off my mask of...
 - Seeking to bring peace, reconciliation, and unity in my family, my workplace, my neighborhood, my church group, my world.
 - Standing up for my faith regardless of the cost.

3. True happiness comes from living in your true mission (5:13-16)

- Jesus makes it clear that the true identity and mission of His followers is to be “the salt of the earth” (v.13).
 - Salt was a common household commodity used to flavor food and to preserve meats (preventing them from decay before the use of refrigeration).
 - Christ followers (the church) help prevent the decay of our society through our moral influence.
 - Strictly speaking, salt can never lose its saltiness, but it can be rendered ineffective by contaminating it (mixing it) with impurities. Then, it is no longer good for seasoning or preserving meat, but rather only good for throwing on the pathway to kill vegetation.
 - Although Christians never lose their identity as children of God, they can be rendered ineffective in their purpose by mingling (getting contaminated with, mixed with) the things of the world (v.13).
- Application #3 – Am I allowing God to use me to help prevent the decay of West Houston-Katy? Or have I allowed my mixture with the world to render me ineffective? Pray: Lord, fill me with Your Spirit to live a life

distinct from the world around me so that I might be Your seasoning and preservative in the midst of a decaying society. Lord, are there any impurities in my life that You want me to remove? Help me do so now.

- Jesus makes it clear that the true identity and mission of His followers is to be “the light of the world” (vv.14-16)
 - Jesus defines our “light” in v. 16 as our “ good deeds ”
 - John Stott: “*Good works* is a general expression to cover everything a Christian says and does because he is a Christian, every outward and visible manifestation of his Christian faith.”
 - We are not to hide our Christian faith but rather be open about it... like a city set on a hill... or like a lamp put on a stand in order to light the entire room. We are not to hide our light! (vv.14-16)
 - Just as salt preserves decaying meat (decaying society), so light dispels darkness in a dark world.
 - John Stott: “We are to be our true Christian selves, openly living the life described in the beatitudes, and not ashamed of Christ. Then people will see us and our good works, and seeing us will glorify God. For they will inevitably recognize that it is by the grace of God we are what we are, that *our* light is *His* light, and that our works are His works done in us and through us. So it is the Light they will praise, not the lamp which bears it; it is our Father in heaven whom they will glorify, not the children He has begotten and who exhibit a certain family likeness.”
- Application #4 – With God’s help and power, this year I am going to purposely choose to shine my light in the dark world around me by...
 - Reaching out in friendship and kindness to the person at work or school or in my neighborhood whom everyone else is ignoring.
 - Doing acts of compassion for those in need (Save the date: The Church Has Left the Building on July 25, 2010.)
 - Doing the right thing whether it is...
 - paying my taxes correctly or
 - not stealing little things from my employer or
 - not stealing copyrighted music or movies or print or
 - not lying or
 - staying true to my spouse even when things are tough or
 - doing my job with excellence and integrity or
 - staying sexually pure in my singleness or
 - not looking at pornography
 - Parenting my children with kindness and love and discipline
 - Cultivating a relationship with someone and telling them the absolutely most important news in the world – how they can have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Questions to Discuss with Your Family, Friends, and Small Group

1. What (literal) mountains have you climbed? Tell us a mountain story.
2. Read Matthew 5:1-16 aloud and discuss its meaning and applications using these notes. Share your applications with each other and pray for each other.