



LIFE IN THE KINGDOM

The Sermon on the Mount

2. Matthew 5:3-12 "Who Is Blessed?"



Matthew
7:24

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and **puts them into practice** is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”



Why do I follow so little
of Jesus' teaching?



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In our day learners usually think of themselves as containers of some sort, with a purely passive space to be filled by the information the teacher possesses and wishes to transfer—the “from jug to mug model.” The teacher is to fill in empty parts of the receptacle with “truth” that may or may not later make some difference to the life of the one who has it. The teacher must get the information *into* them.

... Thus if we today were invited to hear the Sermon on the Mount—or, more likely now, the “Seminar at



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the Sheraton”—we would show up with notebooks, pens, and tape recorders. We would be astonished to find the disciples “just listening” to Jesus and would look around to see if someone was taping it to make sure that everyone could “get it all” if they wanted to.

Working our way through the crowd to the right-hand man, Peter, we might ask where the conference notebooks and other material were and be further astonished when he only says,



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“Just listen!” Perhaps we push the “record” button as we sit down, thankful that we at least will have captured all the spiritual information—if the batteries aren’t dead or the tape doesn’t stick.

... The teacher in Jesus’ time—and especially the religious teacher—taught in such a way that he would impact the life flow of the hearer, leaving a lasting impression without benefit of notes, recorders, or even memorization. Whatever did not make a difference in that way just made no difference. Period.











#blessed

#blessed





We define “blessing” by
our circumstances.



Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them. He said:

Matthew
5:1-12

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

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.



Matthew
5:1-12

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.



Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew
5:1-12

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.



The Beatitudes are simply a description of the kind of people who are responding to Jesus' invitation to enter God's kingdom.



The kingdom of God is
available to *all* who want
to enter.



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The Beatitudes are not teachings on *how* to be blessed. They are not instructions to do anything. They do not indicate conditions that are especially pleasing to God or good for human beings.

No one is actually being told that they are better off for being poor, for mourning, for being persecuted, and so on, or that the conditions listed are recommended ways to well-being before God or man. Nor are the Beatitudes indications of who will be on top “after the revolution.”



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They are explanations and illustrations, drawn from the immediate setting, of the present availability of the kingdom through personal relationship to Jesus. They single out cases that provide proof that, in him, the rule of God from the heavens truly is available in life circumstances that are beyond all human hope.

... Blessed are the physically repulsive, Blessed are those who smell bad, The twisted, misshapen, deformed, The too big, too little, too loud, The bald,



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the fat, and the old— For they are all riotously celebrated in the party of Jesus. ... The flunk-outs and drop-outs and burned-outs. The broke and the broken. ... The swindled, the shoved aside, the replaced. ... The lonely, the incompetent, the stupid. The emotionally starved or emotionally dead. And on and on and on. Is it true that “Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal?” It is true! That is precisely the gospel of heaven’s availability that comes to us through the Beatitudes.



Luke
5:29-30

Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"



Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Matthew
5:6-9



Erna Kim
Hackett

As each individual reads Scripture, they see themselves as the princess in every story. They are Esther, never Xerxes or Haman. They are Peter, Luke but never Judas. They are the woman anointing Jesus, never the Pharisees. They are the Jews escaping slavery, never Egypt.



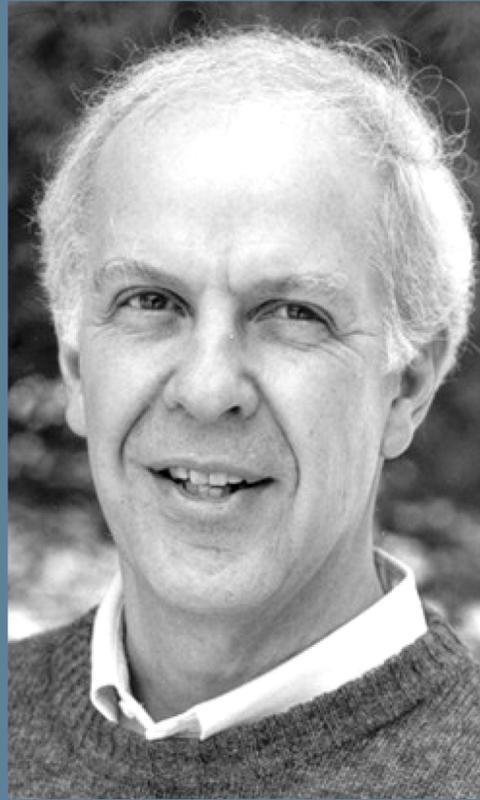
Matthew
5:11-12

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.



Matthew
11:4-6

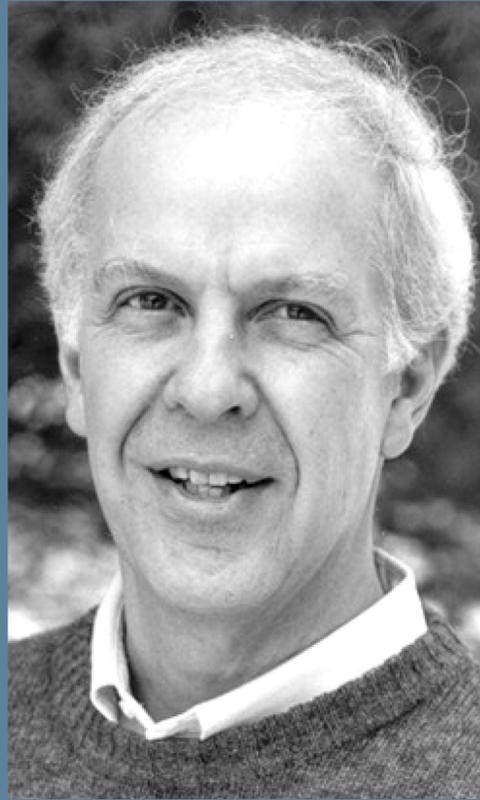
And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. **And blessed is the one who is not offended (*skandalizo*) by me."**



Parker
Palmer

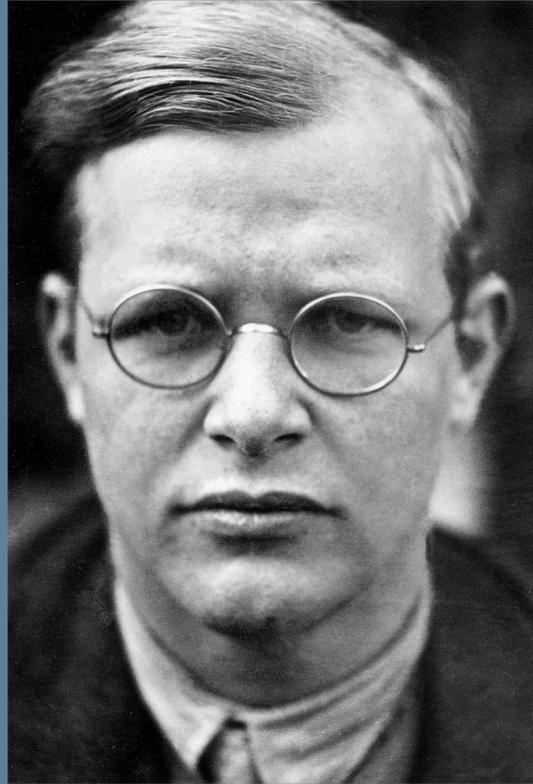
Hear, then, this story about Abba (Father) Felix and his students:

Some brothers...went to see Abba Felix and they begged him to say a word to them. But the old man kept silence. After they had asked for a long time he said to them, "You wish to hear a word?" They said, "Yes, abba." Then the old man said to them, "There are no more words nowadays."



Parker
Palmer

When the brothers used to consult the old men and when they did what was said to them, God showed them how to speak. But now, since they ask without doing that which they hear, God has withdrawn the grace of the word from the old men and they do not find anything to say, since there are no longer any who carry their words out." Hearing this, the brothers groaned, saying, "Pray for us, abba."



Dietrich
Bonhoeffer

The cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise godfearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. ... In fact every command of Jesus is a call to die, with all our affections and lusts. But we do not want to die, and therefore Jesus Christ and his call are necessarily our death as well as our life.



SUMMARY:

The Beatitudes show us that the kingdom of God is available to all who desire to enter and surrender themselves to Jesus' authority.